

*Bhāratīya Vidyā Series 34*

# THE AHĀBHĀRATA

A Study of the Critical Edition

[with special reference to the Suparṇākhyāna of the Ādiparvan]

PROF. MAHESH M. MEHTA, M. A. PH. D. LL. B.  
University of Windsor  
Canada

1976



BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN, BOMBAY-400 007



The present work—The Mahābhārata—A Study of the Critical Edition—illustrates some new aspects of the Mahābhārata Text-Criticism on the basis of Dr. V. S. Sukthankar's Prolegomena and a text-critical—re-examination of a few passages in the Suparṇā-khyāna of the same *parvan*. It, thus, leads us to a step further towards the ultimate reconstruction of the genuine Archetype of our national epic, the Mahābhārata.

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नारायणं नमस्कृत्य नरं चैव नरोत्तमम् ।  
देवीं सरस्वतीं चैव ततो जयमुदीरयेत् ॥







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*First Edition, 1976*

# THE MAHABHARATA

*A Study of the Critical Edition*

*(with special reference to the Superscriptions of the Adhyayas)*

*Price Rs. 12/-*

PROF. NARAYAN M. MEHTA, M.A., M.L.I., D.

University of Windsor

Canada

1976



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## PREFACE

We have great pleasure in placing before Sanskrit scholars and students "THE MAHĀBHĀRATA—A Study of the Critical Edition with special reference to the Suparṇākhyāna of the Ādiparvan" by Dr. Mahesh M. Mehta. The present work is the rewarding result of Dr. Mehta's study for the Ph.D. degree of the University of Bombay under the able guidance of Rev. Dr. A. Esteller. Dr. Mehta has critically examined a few passages of the critically edited text of the Suparṇākhyāna and has suggested some new directions for the ultimate reconstruction of the Archetype of the Mahābhārata. We hope the work will not only enrich the field of Indological studies but will inspire the scholars to study on similar lines that would bring us nearer to the Archetype of our national epic, the Mahābhārata.

*Bombay*

6-3-1976

J. H. DAVE

Hon. Director



## FOREWORD

The present book is in a way a dream come true for this writer and at the same time for the author, the fruit of a *guruparamparā* that links it closely with the critical "editio princeps" of the Mahābhārata (Poona, 1933 ff.). As Dr. V. S. Sukthankar himself avows in his Foreword to the Ādiparvan (Fascicule I, p. viii) it was Rev. Fr. R. Zimmermann S. J. of St. Xavier's College, Bombay, who had greatly helped him in the initial stages of his text-critical venture. At that time, in the early twenties, Fr. Zimmermann had also initiated this writer into the study of Sanskrit, which he then proceeded to pursue under the aegis of the renowned Dr. H. Lüders of the Berlin University. To the latter, Sukthankar pays a glowing tribute as the greatest Sanskrit philologist of his time and an exceptional authority in the field of Mahābhārata text-criticism (cf. Prolegomena, p. cx: Critical Edition). Both Fr. Zimmermann and Sukthankar had been the *śiṣyas* of Dr. Lüders, and this writer's entering into the same *gurukula* made him a member of that privileged brotherhood, even if a very junior one. It was there that this writer imbibed at the feet of that master the spirit of scholarly text-criticism (which had inspired Sukthankar) and thus was able to appreciate the value of the text-critical edition of the Ādiparvan that was just then appearing in print and which Dr. Lüders himself looked upon with satisfaction and a sort of fatherly pride as the outstanding achievement of his one-time pupil. When at the end of his academic career this writer published his text-critical work "Die Älteste Rezension des Mahānāṭakam" (in "Abhandlungen der D.M.G."), he took the opportunity to pay a visit to Sukthankar and to present him with a copy of the work with a sincere acknowledgment of his excellent edition of the Ādiparvan. With a touching simplicity and modesty Sukthankar eagerly inquired what his revered teacher, Dr. Lüders, personally felt about his work beyond the range of public compliments. This writer reassured him of Dr. Lüders' sincere admiration of his work. This he cordially appreciated, all the more since he was being unduly urged to hasten, and thus his scholarly thoroughness was being put under pressure by circles that were only anxious to see immediate results-against his own better judgement, which in the end wisely managed to strike the golden mean. From those days began this writer's interest in the Mahābhārata text-criticism, which he cultivated by gathering copious materials and publishing articles meant to continue Sukthankar's work upon and beyond the basis of his Critical Edition. One of those articles tackled some of the text-critical problems in the Suparṇākhyāna of the Ādiparvan; but the result of that special study left this writer partly dissatisfied and aware of the



further problems implicated therein. A deeper investigation was contemplated, but this writer's simultaneous text-critical interest in the Ṛgveda had been absorbing more and more his time and energies. Hence the Mahābhārata had to yield pride of place to the *cūḍāmaṇi* of Sanskrit literature. But Providence found a way for the Mahābhārata studies. The author, Mahesh Mehta, came for his Doctorate under this writer's guidance, and the latter was only too happy to find in him a very uncommon and intelligent responsiveness to the intricate problematic of the Mahābhārata text-criticism. The eager candidate immersed himself into Sukthankar's and this writer's previous studies (as well as those of the other Mahābhārata editors) and in prolonged seminar-sessions with his guide thrashed out the tangled riddles of a series of text-critical problems pivoting around a point that had baffled Sukthankar himself and had led this writer to further probings with inconclusive results. In this painstaking work the author assiduously strove for the difficult art of entering into the spirit of the protean "redactorial dynamism" which is a typical and intriguing trait of the Indian literary transmission.

The present book is the result of its author's conscientious scholarly endeavour based on this writer's spadework but erected into a final personal achievement. Yet the most precious reward for that co-operation will be to see this book accepted as what it is and is intended to be: the opening of a door towards *the ultimate reconstruction of the genuine Archetype of our Mahābhārata* beyond the Critical Edition. Dr. Mahesh Mehta has thus led the way in the direction of further text-critical attempts aiming at a greater depuration of the magnificent Critical Edition of the Mahābhārata.

St. Xavier's College,  
Bombay.

(Rev.) A. ESTELLER S.J.  
Ph.D. (Rome), M.A. Dr. Phil. (Berlin)



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The present work is the outcome of my Ph.D. thesis entitled "Some Important Text-Critical Problems in the Suparṇākhyāna of the Mahābhārata". Submitted to the University of Bombay in 1964, it is presented here in a revised and condensed form. It illustrates some new aspects of the Mahābhārata Text-Criticism on the basis of Dr. V. S. Sukthankar's Prolegomena to the Critical Edition of the Ādiparvan and a text-critical re-examination of a few passages in the Suparṇākhyāna of the same parvan.

It is my great pleasure to express my sincere gratitude to my teacher, Rev. Dr. A. Esteller, whose kind and loving scholarly guidance initiated and led me through the intricacies of the science of Mahābhārata Text-Criticism.

I should also like to mention how thankful I am to Professor Suresh A. Upadhyaya, Joint Director (Academic), Bhāratiya Vidyā Bhavan, for all his help.

*Windsor, 1972*

MAHESH MEHTA



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THE MAHĀBHĀRATA—A STUDY OF THE  
CRITICAL EDITION

[With Special Reference to the Suparṇākhyāna of the Ādiparvan]

*By*

PROF. MAHESH M. MEHTA, M.A., Ph.D., LL.B.

*University of Windsor, Canada*







## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa, the twin monumental creations of the vision and imagination of the ancient Kavis known as Vyāsa and Vālmiki enshrine within themselves the values of the Bhāratīya culture. They are in fact the richest heirlooms of India's cultural heritage. The history of these epics of India has flowed through many centuries and has witnessed several stages of growth and development. The secret of their deathlessness lies in absorbing and assimilating varied elements within their generous fold. It is the dynamic character of these national vehicles of the Brāhmaṇic dharma that explains their deep and abiding effect on the Indian people, regardless of their social status or intellectual level. The epics have exerted a formative influence by lending a certain norm of conduct to the Indian life in general through the puissant characters of their heroes embodying the complex human nature in all its shades of magnanimity and malignity. The thoughts that we think, the ideas that we entertain, the beliefs that we hold, the moral scruples that we respect, the attitudes that we adopt, the outlook on life that we harbour, the ideals that we cherish,—all this to a greater or smaller extent is traceable to the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata, the epitomes of the traditional culture of India. By providing a strong cultural nexus, the epics contribute an integrating force to our national life. Dr. V. S. Sukthankar, the first critical editor of the Mahābhārata says about the epic in impassioned words, 'Whether we realise it or not, we still stand under the spell of the Mahābhārata. There is many a different strand that is woven in the thread of our civilization reaching back into hoary antiquity. Amidst the deepest of them there is more than one that is originally drawn from the ancient Bhāratavarṣa and the Sanskrit Literature. And well in the centre of this vast mass of Sanskrit Literature, stands this traditional book of divine inspiration, unapproachable and far removed from possibilities of of human competition. (p. 438) In various shapes and sizes it has been the cherished heritage of the people continuously for some millenia and to the present day is interwoven with the thoughts and beliefs and moral ideas of a nation numbering over (300) million souls.' (p. 98)<sup>1</sup> Sukthankar warns the modern sceptics, 'There is a danger that in our pseudo-scientific mood we may be tempted to discard this great book, this great and

1. The pagination throughout is according to the *Sukthankar Memorial Edition*, Vol. I: *Critical Studies in the Mahābhārata*, ed. P. K. Gode (Bombay, 1944).



lustrous heritage of Bhāratavarṣa, thinking that we have outgrown it. That would be a capital blunder! That would in fact mean nothing but an indication of our will to commit suicide, national suicide, the signal of our national extinction. For never was truer word spoken than when the late German Indologist Hermann Oldenberg said that 'In the Mahābhārata breathe the united soul of India and the individual souls of her people'. And why is that? Because the Mahābhārata is the national saga of India. It is in other words the content of our collective unconscious.<sup>2</sup> And just for that reason it refuses to be discarded. We must therefore grasp this great book with both hands and face it squarely. Then we shall recognise that it is our past that has prolonged into the present. We are it: I mean the real WE! Shall we be guilty of strangling our own soul? NEVER.' (p. 439)

Besides, the Mahābhārata reveals itself as a treasure-house, a repository of traditional knowledge in its entirety. The phenomenal compass of this huge encyclopedia embraces everything conceivable. 'What is not here is nowhere.' The Mahābhārata is called the 'Fifth Veda' as it were, which is perhaps the most eloquent traditional expression of its wisdom and sanctity. In Sukthankar's words, 'The Mahābhārata offers a very sound and complete exposition of Dharma and Nīti according to Indian theorists, a feature which has given the venerable old monument of Indian antiquity its rank as Smṛti and its abiding value and interest to the Hindus, ———.' (p. 335) The pre-eminent importance of the epic is acknowledged, in that it is an inexhaustible mine for the investigation of the philosophy, religion and mythology, law and polity, customs and manners and social institutions of ancient India. The epic owing to its richness and variety has unfolded new vistas of knowledge concerning ancient India and has provided a fund of invaluable information about its culture to the Indologists.

The heroic epic depicting the great war in the family of the Bhāratas soon became the convenient medium for the communication and propagation of the Brāhmaṇic thought, religion and culture. It was now considered as if it was a common property to be freely handled by all, and thus came to be enlarged and diluted by its numberless well-meaning but at times uninspired lovers who kept on adding *ad libitum* to the old epic tale. The transmission of secular works such as the epics is utterly different from that of the religious texts such as the Ṛgveda. In the latter case sanctity is attached to the texts and so there is a guarantee for the preservation of the original contents. Whereas, as Sukthankar says,

2. 'The Mahābhārata affords us an insight into the deepest depths of the soul of the Indian people.'—M. Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature* (Calcutta, 1927), p. 327.



'It is evident that no great care would be lavished on the text by the custodians of the tradition to guard it against corruption and elaboration, or against arbitrary emendation and normalization; to reproduce the received text, which was not guarded by canonical authority or religious sanction, with any degree of precision would be neither attempted by these bards, nor required of them.' (p. 1) It is thus that the Mahābhārata is found in an inflated and diversified condition, which has made some call it 'the most monstrous chaos' (Oldenberg) or 'a literary monster' (Winternitz).<sup>3</sup>

Within this mass however, lies the jewel of the real epic, which yearns pathetically for its emergence. 'In this jungle of poetry, which scholarship has only just begun to clear, there shoots forth much true and genuine poetry, hidden by the wild undergrowth. Out of the unshapely mass, shine out the most precious blossoms of immortal poetic art and profound wisdom.'<sup>4</sup> In other words, our Mahābhārata text is like stratified earth, whose various layers formed from time to time are being excavated and sifted by a textual archaeologist with the aid of the keen-pointed tool of his critical faculty.

Owing to the great popularity of the epic, the total corpus of its text is to be found in hundreds of manuscripts in the various regional scripts of India; hence the contents of the popular Mahābhārata as prevalent among the different people are in a very confused and uncertain condition. The immense cultural significance of the epic for the scholars made it gradually peremptory to prepare its reliable critical edition as purged of the redactorial corruptions and accretions, in as far as the available evidence allowed

3. Sukthankar looks at this prolific growth of the epic from another perspective and reveals the ever-living, ever-vibrant nature of the Mahābhārata. 'When I say that the Mahābhārata manuscripts contain quantities of spurious additions, I intend no disparagement or condemnation of the text or of the manuscripts. The process is normal, inevitable and in a wider sense wholly right. If the epic is to continue to be a vital force in the life of any progressive people, it must be a slow-changing book! The fact of expurgation and elaboration is only an outward indication of its being a book of inspiration and guidance in life, and not merely a book lying unused and forgotten on a dusty book-shelf. Those are probably just the touches that have saved the Mahābhārata from the fate of being consigned to the limbo of oblivion, which has befallen its sister epics like the Gilgamesh.' (p. 128, p. 333)

Sukthankar also deals with the question of 'epic chaos' or 'chaotic epic' from different planes, mundane, moral and metaphysical in his *On the Meaning of the Mahābhārata*. This approach takes the whole Mahābhārata as we have it, which does not however stultify or preclude the text-critical study (both Lower and Higher Criticisms) of the Great Epic. He has endeavoured to show that the Mahābhārata with all its medley still possesses an organic coherence or internal synthesis and conceptional unity, *Weltanschauung* pervading the whole book. 'Nevertheless it is well to bear in mind that however much the textual critic might peel off from the external trappings of the Great Epic, its *Gestalt* remains absolutely unaltered. (p. 23) The Mahābhārata, which may have started as an epic, has certainly not ended in becoming a chaos, as Oldenberg imagined. It would be a pardonable hyperbole to say that it has ended in becoming the cosmos.' (p. 124)

4. Winternitz, *History*, p. 326.



the reconstruction of a common parent text. The task of restoration especially of the ancient and popular classics to their oldest and original form is simply colossal.

In this connection, it will be essential to trace the history of the various efforts towards reconstructing the Mahābhārata in a 'Critical Edition'. (We give here a summary of the account given by Sukthankar.) Already more than a century ago, a dim realization of this indispensable need was actually felt. Barring the old editions not useful to us because of their want of proper information as regards the manuscripts on which they were based and the principles according to which they were edited, it is the *Editio Princeps* (1836) that stands out as the initial work in the story of Mahābhārata text-editing. The Mahābhārata was then published at Calcutta in 4 volumes. Then comes the well-known pothi-form Bombay Edition (lithographed by Ganpat Krishnaji in 1862 and by Gopal Narayana in 1913 and by others) which was accompanied by the excellent Sanskrit commentary of Nīlakanṭha called *Bhārata-bhāvadīpa*. It represents Nīlakanṭha's own edition of the text based upon a comparison of manuscripts (of course, those few that were available to him) and so was soon in vogue among people. That text is called the "Vulgate". Both these (Calcutta and Bombay) Editions furnish the Northern recension of the Epic. Their differences do not forbid us to regard them as having sprung up from a unitary source. Then follow in their wake the Kumbhakṣam and the Grantha Editions, the representatives of the Telugu and the Grantha versions of the Southern recension; but, we may mention beforehand that these editions of single versions were rendered unimportant by P.P.S. Sastri's Critical Edition of the Southern recension of the Mahābhārata in 1931. The most remarkable landmark in the province of Mahābhārata text-criticism is the achievement of Shri Pratap Chandra Roy, who brought out his edition (in 1833-1896 before Sastri's edition) under the sponsorship of the Bhārata Dātavya Kāryālaya. Sukthankar has nothing but wholehearted appreciation and admiration for Roy's wonderful insight into and mastery of the Mahābhārata problem. Roy wrote, "There can be no edition of the Mahābhārata, how carefully edited soever, that would please scholars of every part of India....Like other ancient works that have come down to us from century to century by the method of manual transcription, large interpolations have been inserted in this great work. To settle at this fag-end of the 19th century, what portions are genuine and what otherwise, is, except in a very few instances, simply impossible. I know of no method except that of taking that only as undoubtedly genuine, which occurs in all the manuscripts of the East, the North, the West and the South.....In his attempt to please everybody, (a scho-



lar) will, like the painter in the fable, please none, particularly among readers of judgment and critical discrimination. The fact is, that the divergences of manuscripts are so great that it is perfectly impossible to produce an edition that could at once satisfy both Āryāvarta and Dākṣiṇātya." Approving of this "simple,—nay obvious" critical principle enunciated with "highly commendable objectivity", Sukthankar proceeds to state, "I have quoted P.C. Roy in extenso.....because of some remarkably sound principles of textual criticism, briefly but clearly propounded therein by him. Pratap Chandra Roy had grasped the Mahābhārata problem in all its essentials. But the time was not yet ripe for the actual preparation of a critical edition of the Mahābhārata." (p. 44) The complete, consolidated critical edition of the Mahābhārata was of far-reaching importance, and yet one of the desiderata of Indological studies. The modern Sanskrit scholars were labouring under a sense of hesitation and despondency for want of a definitive text of the Mahābhārata, which was the only safe ground for their studies and without which their generalizations were bound to be shaky. The idea of one single Critical Edition of the Mahābhārata was inaugurated by Winternitz, who with his true scholarly understanding used to persistently stress before the Conferences of the International Congress of Orientalists (XI-1897-Paris, XII-1899-Rome, XIII-1902-Hamburg) its crying need. At the XIth International Congress, he observed that a Critical Edition of the Mahābhārata was "wanted as the only sound basis for all Mahābhārata studies, nay, for all studies connected with the epic literature of India". Before the XIIth session of the International Congress, he concretely put forward his proposal for the formation of a Sanskrit Epic Text Society. "What we really need and what seems to me to be the *sine qua non* for historical and critical researches regarding the text of the Mahābhārata, is a critical edition which should neither satisfy the people of Northern India nor those of the Deccan, but which should satisfy the wants of Sanskrit scholarship."<sup>5</sup> Again, in the XIIIth session in 1902, Winternitz reiterated his requisition and endeavoured to impress upon the assembled savants its indispensability. Yet, Winternitz's enthusiasm did not receive the response expected from an international coterie of Orientalists. They were sceptical of the possibility of reaching one critical text of the epic. In spite of the general apathetic attitude, Winternitz's plea for the formation of an Epic Text Society materialized in the form of an undertaking sponsored by the International Association of Academies, which was suggested by the rather uninterested Indian Section of the XIIth International Oriental Congress. At the same time,

5. M. Winternitz, 'A Sanskrit Epic Text Society,' *Indian Antiquary*, XXX, (1901). 118.



Winternitz presented a promemoria on the necessity of a Critical Edition of the Mahābhārata to the Vienna Academy of Sciences. Under the auspices of the International Association of Academies, in furtherance of the project of a Critical Edition of the Mahābhārata, Dr. Heinrich Lüders brought forth a 'Specimen' of a critical edition of the Mahābhārata called *Druckprobe einer kritischen Ausgabe des Mahābhārata* (Leipzig, 1908). About this great pioneering work of Dr. Lüders, Sukthankar says, "This little brochure, like a beacon light in the perilous navigation of the Mahābhārata Ocean, must rank in the annals of Mahābhārata studies as the first tentative critical edition of the Mahābhārata. . . . The tender seedling, planted with infinite care, did not, however thrive in the uncongenial European soil." Under the scheme of the International Association of Academies, except this 'Druckprobe', nothing had been published after it was laid before the XVth International Oriental Congress in 1908 at Copenhagen. However, Dr. Lüders along with his pupils was persistently engaged in the work of classifying and collating the manuscripts. But, unfortunately, the (First) World War completely put a stop to that and to other earnest endeavours of the Mahābhārata scholars. (The study of a past national war had to give way to an actual World War.) The war over, the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (BORI for short, founded in 1915, and therefore then (in 1919) in its early infancy), to its immortal honour, harboured, with confidence and courage, the stupendous enterprise of critically editing the Mahābhārata under the enlightened patronage of Shrimant Balasaheb Pant Pratinidhi, Ruler of Aundh. Gratefully and warmly accepting his 'princely gift', the Institute undertook the work. Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, the doyen of the Sanskritists of India, inaugurated in 1919 this 'Mahābhārata task', with the *maṅgala manṭra*.

*nārāyaṇaṃ namaskṛtya naraṃ caiva narottamam  
devīm sarasvatīm caiva tato jayam udīrayet*

Shri N.B. Utgikar was the first Editor-in-Chief who brought out the edition of the Virāṭaparvan. But the definitive project took place under the leadership of his successor, Dr. V.S. Sukthankar, who laid the foundation of and gave the final shape to the Critical Edition as we have it today. Since the very launching of this momentous project at BORI, its gradual progress became the centre of keen interest and active attention of the international Indologists. In 1928, the first fascicule of 60 pages appeared—to be followed by the whole of the Ādiparvan.

It is no wonder that after so many efforts the precipitate result crystallized into the right thing viz. an *editio critica* settled accord-



ing to eclectic principles in general, on the basis of a critical comparison of the entire (available) evidence of the manuscripts from all parts of India in various provincial scripts. It was a singular achievement, a hallmark of Indian critical scholarship. Another merit of Sukhthankar's Critical Edition (1933) is that it has collected and utilized, wherever possible, the evidence of all Sanskrit commentaries, of abridgements and adaptations in Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit and modern Indian languages, and of the more or less faithful translations, such as those in Persian and Old-Javanese. In addition to the restoration of the Mahābhārata text which is contained in the Critical Edition, the entire set of manuscriptal data—collated, classified and considered but rejected—is neatly and accurately gathered, variants at the foot of the page and the longer passages in an Appendix. Thus, future scholars may have before them the entire significant evidence for their further study and may in consequence be able to arrive at their conclusions independently. This up-to-date Critical Apparatus clearly represents the whole complicated network of the Mahābhārata textual tradition; "the jetsam and flotsam of Mahābhārata poesie" (p.127). "The Mahābhārata is the whole of the epic tradition: the *entire* Critical Apparatus. Its separation into the constituted text and the critical notes is a representation made for the purpose of visualizing, studying and analyzing the panorama of the more grand and less grand thought-movements that have crystallized in the shape of the text handed down to us in our Mahābhārata manuscripts." (p. 128-129). As Dr. Belvalkar says, "This has been achieved not by following any rough-and-ready, scissors-and-paste method which becomes very often subjective and capricious, but by following, as far as possible, a strictly objective and scientific method of text-constitution, which has been tried with eminent success elsewhere."<sup>6</sup> The method becomes applicable even in the case of the uncommonly complex problem of the Mahābhārata. It is natural that a Critical Edition of the epic produced with such sedulous scholarship should have been warmly received by and should evoke unstinted approbation from the Sanskrit scholars the world over.<sup>7</sup>

6. *Prospectus of the Critical Edition of the Mahābhārata*, (Poona), p. 6.

7. It would not be improper to mention here the words said in appreciation of the merit of Sukhthankar's work by a few outstanding judges in the field.

1. 'I have been greatly impressed by the arrangements that have been made at the Institute for the collation of the Mahābhārata manuscripts. The arrangements are such as will ensure great accuracy and perfect clearness in the registration of the various readings.....Your work seems to me to merit the highest possible praise both as regards the constituting of the text, and the clarity and succinctness with which the MSS. evidence has been recorded. ....In my reading of the text I came across no passage of any importance, where I had occasion to differ from you as to the choice of the right reading.'

—Heinrich Lüders.



For a better understanding of the Mahābhārata Text-Criticism, it is necessary to consider what the 'Text-Criticism' of Western Classical Philology (which is its prototype) is. It is a highly technical science developed by the Western mind. It was devised for being applied to the critical reconstruction of Greek and Latin Classical and Biblical texts, and the efficiency of its scientific principles has been successfully tested. Through its rigorously critico-rational discipline and methodology, it seeks to disengage the genuine text from the super-incumbent spurious stuff, to disentangle the underlying plant from its luxuriant intertwinements. Thus, it is inspired by a noble purpose of rejuvenating the literary creations of the master-spirits of yore in their original splendour as stripped of their later trappings.

We shall now adumbrate the aims and methods of the Science of Text-Criticism. The entire programme consists of two sharply distinguished stages: Textual or Lower Criticism and Higher Criticism. The former again is made up of 3 constituents: (1) Heuristics, (2) Recensio, (3) Emendatio. These successive procedures enable us to comprehend the nature of the science. They have been so laid down that, taken together, they fulfil the object of Text-Criticism, which is to recover as far as possible the authentic or the 'original' text, in other words, to determine a text resembling the author's own composition as closely as possible. And this is arrived at on the basis of estimation and interpretation of the manuscriptal evidence. This should be clear from what each of these stages means. By *Heuristics* is meant the collection and classification of the entire material consisting of manuscripts and testimonia, so as

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2. Winternitz says, 'The Adiparvan, in Dr. Sukthankar's Critical Edition of Mahābhārata, is now complete, and I have no hesitation in saying that this is the most important event in the history of Sanskrit Philology since the publication of Max Mueller's edition of the Rgveda with Sāyaṇa's commentary.....Dr. Sukthankar has, by his edition of the Adiparvan, created a high standard of workmanship. (His) collaborators will be greatly helped not only by the example set by the first editor in the edition itself, but also by the scholarly way in which he has treated, in the Prolegomena, the complicated manuscript tradition, and mastered the whole problem of Mahābhārata Text Criticism.' 'A monumental work of scholarship, (ABORI, XV, 159, 175).

'Neither in India nor in Europe any one scholar will be found who could have done the work better than Dr. Sukthankar has done.' (*Indologica Pragensia*, I (1929), 67.)

3. 'No *advocatus diaboli* could have tried harder than I to discover flaws. And I can say without hesitation or reservation that in my opinion it would be impossible to make any serious improvements in methods, or successfully to attack the general results.....Dr. Sukthankar deserves to be heartily congratulated on the brilliant success of his work. More than that, he deserves the active support of all Sanskritists, and of all who are interested in the furtherance of this supremely important work, which none could do better than he.....In every respect, therefore, this monumental work will reflect the utmost credit on its editor and his assistants, and on the great Indian people who may now justly regard it as a matter of national pride.....When completed, this edition of the Mahābhārata will occupy a place in the history of Sanskrit scholarship with which only one other work—the lexicon of Böhtlingk and Roth—can hope to vie in magnitude and importance.' F. Edgerton, 'Review of the Adiparvan,' JAOS, XLVIII, 190.



to form a pedigree or a genealogical tree (*stemma codicum*). This is a most important preliminary requisite for the preparation of a Critical Edition. *Recensio* means the restoration of the earliest ascertainable Archetype, the parent and progenitor of all manuscripts. *Emendatio* is an editorial attempt to eliminate untrustworthy elements (even though properly documented by the written evidence itself) by transcending the manuscript tradition and actually correcting or changing it into something new. Of course, this job is not fanciful or capricious if done in accordance with objective criteria, but it does have several limitations in its application. (This is with reference to textual variants.) *Higher Criticism* is the separation of the sources not ascribable to the author. A fine discrimination between their (Lower and Higher Criticisms) operation-spheres needs to be carefully made for there is every likelihood of the hair-thin boundary between them being lost sight of, with the consequence that their provinces may get intermingled and confused. In the process of Lower Criticism, the totally spurious matter (i.e. specious interpolations of individual manuscripts) is winnowed out and the residue is the critical edition. In other words, this means that the total stock contained in all the manuscripts combined exceeds the contents of the critical edition, which forms only the highest common factor so to say, of the manuscriptal materials. Now, when the critical edition is properly ascertained, Higher Criticism steps in. 'Higher Criticism can begin only after Lower Criticism has done its work and not until then', says Dr. Sukthankar. (p. 227) The Critical Edition is actually the beginning of a critical study of the Epic from a comprehensive point of view. The critical edition itself now becomes the substrate of an extended process of pruning. Higher Criticism procures us the *original* of the poet, as shorn of its subsequent additions, by dint of intrinsic and internal (yet objective) criteria. Whosoever can reason out more cogently and convincingly in favour of his viewpoint from facts and data contained in the critically ascertained text, can hope to be in the right and be accepted.—This is the summary description of the structure of the science of Text-Criticism.

The natural question that one may set to himself while perusing all this would be: 'But why all this, when the matter is finally and satisfactorily settled? It seems needless and redundant.' To this we reply that the foregoing history of the various milestones of Mahābhārata text-editing has not attained its perfect goal even with Sukthankar's excellent Critical Edition. And Sukthankar has himself, with a genuine scholarly understanding visualized the possibility or rather the necessity of renewed attempts in the direction opened by his Critical Edition. He says, '.....I have ventured on the perilous path of text-reconstruction, in the hope and belief that



it will present a more faithful picture of the original than any extant codex would do. That to prepare such a text is a phenomenally difficult task, no one can realise better than the editor himself. It is as certain as inevitable that in preparing a text like this, the editor will frequently make blunders, even gross blunders.—It is to be feared that there is no royal road to success in this incomparably difficult field. The only path left open to us by which we may return to the original Mahābhārata or Bhārata is the rough, narrow scientific foot-path of repeated trial and error. More than one attempt will probably have to be made before the ideal is attained. It will, therefore, be prudent not to claim too much for the *first* critical edition, nor to expect too much from it." (p. 3, p. 130) Again, he says, "Though with great difficulty, I am got hither, yet I do not repent me all the trouble. My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in the pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My marks and scars, I carry with me, to be a witness for me, that I have fought his battles who will be my Rewarder." (Preface, p. 6) Accordingly, at Dr. Sukthankar's own invitation, we venture to "grasp firm the hilt and smite on", to go behind and beyond his Critical Edition.

To Dr. Sukthankar's supreme honour it must be said, that the Critical Edition, as noted above, apart from embodying the entire documentary evidence, is also a critically and scientifically constituted text in consonance with certain canons of the Mahābhārata text-criticism, innovated and propounded by him for the first time. The Critical Edition of the Ādiparvan and the Āraṇyakaparvan, the masterly Critical Apparatus, and the brilliant Prolegomena (besides his other Epic Studies) abundantly betoken his amazing analytical and critical acumen, his scientific objectivity and above all his mathematical precision. Truly Dr. Sukthankar had in him harmoniously blended, the virtues of an able scholar<sup>8</sup>—penetrating intellect, vast experience, thorough knowledge of facts, conscientious application, unflinching exactitude, steadfast devotion, and, to crown all, a dynamic perception of the epic tradition, the want of which can rob critical scholarship of its verve and life, and reduce it to

8. "But (owing to Dr. Sukthankar's sudden demise) the loss to scholarship is immeasurable, and naturally, far more important. I am appalled at the thought that it will now be necessary to entrust the Mahābhārata edition to others. Few persons now existing are as well gifted by nature as he was with the peculiar combination of intellectual qualities needed for this work. And literally not one has had the experience which he had, and which is second in importance only to that ability. He had arrived at a point where so many things had become almost automatic to him, like second nature: things which even those of us who have helped in the edition cannot control as he did, though we may have painfully struggled towards an approximation of a few of them. Now, just when he could have exploited to the full this unique combination of knowledge and experience—*jñānam savijñānam*—he is cut off in the midst of it."—F. Edgerton, *ABORI*, XXIV, 136.



a dry-as-dust dissection. In his posthumous work, *On the Meaning of the Mahābhārata*,<sup>9</sup> an eloquently delivered set of lectures, Sukthankar approaches the Mahābhārata from a synthetic and philosophical point of view, a happy complement of his analytic practice as a text-critic. His style of writing can be appropriately characterized as 'magniloquent versatility'; it has both the force of a rapid stream and the lucidity of a placid lake.

Whatever may be our differences in some of the matters here discussed, we cannot but acknowledge that Dr. Sukthankar was an *ācārya* as it were, who established a new era in our sphere and gave a 'stately status' to Indian scholarship. The completion of the project of the Critical Edition of the Mahābhārata is an event of tremendous scholarly significance in the history of Indology. It commenced under Sukthankar's stewardship and continued to take steady strides of progress towards its destination for nearly half a century substantially upon the solid foundation-laying principles and methods established by his imposing work.

We seize here the opportunity of expressing our indebtedness to Dr. Sukthankar, since our complementary efforts are built upon his groundwork. Our research does not claim to be absolutely original, since we follow materially his lead. However, it assays to uncover *certain* hitherto unemphasized aspects of Mahābhārata text-criticism in relation to Sukthankar's perception of the epic transmission tradition on the theoretical side. On the practical, it has led to a reassessment and partial revision of his fundamental method and consequently to an alteration of the text-critical reconstructions of *some* passages in demonstration of our methodological differences. The documentary data do not change, but their evaluation and interpretation do; the issues are the same, but the principles and method in dealing with them, have undergone a re-appraisal. It is not intended to be a systematic acceptance or rejection of Sukthankar's work. There is neither total disagreement nor complete agreement; it is in fact substantial agreement with a difference. With respect to Sukthankar's text-critical reconstructions, *by and large* we accept them, for we do concur with him in the general evaluation of the main trends of the Mahābhārata text tradition. Our agreement with Dr. Sukthankar is thus undoubtedly far-reaching; yet in all modesty, it may be said that the differences are also of considerable text-critical importance.

We have investigated some outstanding textual quandaries in the form of extra-passages in the *Suparṇākhyāna* of the *Adiparvan*. All these reconstructions suggested have been the outcome of a long and painstaking toil; great was the difficulty of substantiating

9. The Asiatic Society of Bombay, 1957.



an alteration of some of Sukthankar's so carefully considered judgments with a sufficiently dependable correctness. By the unravelling and vindication of certain *new* aspects and tendencies of the epic tradition, the present work tries to pave the way for a still further continuation and deepening of scholarly investigation and research into Mahābhārata text-criticism pioneered by Sukthankar's text-critical genius. Sukthankar had taken a gigantic stride, yet it was a first one. His superb accomplishment can be carried further ahead, given a deeper and minuter probe into the manuscriptal data. However, if and when we differ, our attitude is always inspired by the motto: *amicus Sukthankar, magis amica veritas*. We confidently feel that Sukthankar himself would have wished for nothing better, since in the text-critical field, he so nobly and uncompromisingly practised *satyam eva jayate*.



## PRINCIPLES OF MAHABHĀRATA TEXT-CRITICISM

## Pedigree of Ādiparvan Versions

or  
Stemma Codicum

Vyāsa's Bhārata

Ur-Mahābhārata

Archetype

Recensions

N (North)

S (South)

Versions

V (NW)

(NE)

γ

ε

Śāradā  
ŚKāśmīrī  
KNepālī  
NVaidehī  
VBengālī  
BDevanāgarī  
DTelugu  
TGrantha  
GMalayālam  
M



## OUTLINE

### *Archetype*

Nature of the epic transmission tradition—Ascertainment of the Archetype—Impossibility of complete restoration of the Archetype—Sukthankar's main thesis of post-archetypal, pre-recensional oral versions discussed—Our disagreement with Sukthankar—'original doublets' shown to be not original.

Conclusion: No break in the continuous line of tradition between the Archetype and the recensions.

The nature of the Mahābhārata archetype.

### *Post-Archetypal Stage*

*Sukthankar's view:* Two recensions—*Textus Simplicior* as the norm—Only addition and no omission, the order of redactorial operation—Possibility of omission indicated, with *onus probandi* on one who asserts it.

*Our view:* Rather three recensions—Possibility of excision argued—General characteristics of the recensions described—Excising trend in the Extremes, NW and S, NE conservative and more faithfully representative of the Archetype—Substantiation in Part II: Text-critical Problems—Psychological approach to the manuscriptal data stressed.

### *Archetype*

We shall first set forth succinctly and systematically the nature of the Mahābhārata transmission tradition and the problems of text-criticism as described by Sukthankar and in this we wish to draw freely upon his writings.<sup>1</sup> For a better appreciation of our differences, we shall register our reservations only after an exposition of Sukthankar's thesis in its essence.

The initial question posed by Sukthankar is, 'What is the critically constituted text?' Faced with the criticism from some quarters<sup>2</sup> alleging what he had never claimed, he clears the misconception by stating what the constituted text is not. He says, 'The Editor is firmly convinced that the text presented in this edition is not anything like the autograph-copy of the work of its mythical

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1. vide fn. 1, ch. I.

2. Sylvain Lévi says, 'If I could dare to allow myself a suggestion in this domain, I would advise the Editor to renounce, out of pity for us, the very part of the work which he has nearest at heart and which affords to his spirit the greatest satisfaction, the reconstruction of the Ur-Mahābhārata as he likes to say.' (p. 129 fn.)



author, Maṇṛṣi Vyāsa. It is not, in any sense, a reconstruction of the Ur-Mahābhārata or of the Ur-Bhārata, that ideal but impossible desideratum. It is also not an exact replica of the poem recited by Vaiṣampāyana before Janamejaya. It is further wholly uncertain how close it approaches the text of the poem said to be recited by the Sūta (or Sauti) before Śaunaka and the other dwellers of the Naimiṣa forest. It is but a *modest* attempt to present a text of the epic as old as the extant manuscript material will permit us to reach with some semblance of confidence.' (p. 129) 'Our objective can only be to reconstruct the oldest form of the text which it is possible to reach, on the basis of the manuscript material available.' (p. 108)

This 'modesty' of Sukthankar comes from a fundamental realization of the inapplicability of the conventional principles and methods of Classical Philology operating upon simple texts with their rather mechanical or systematic transmission. '(It would) be impossible to apply to the Mahābhārata, the special canons of textual criticism which are derived from a study of classical (Greek and Latin) texts, . . . . . and can be applied to the Mahābhārata with great limitations.' (p. 2, 97) 'The classical philologist has evidently no experience in dealing with a text of this description, an opus of such gigantic dimensions and complex character, with a long and intricate history of its own behind it. . . . Here the method and principles of textual reconstruction must first be evolved from a special and intensive study of the manuscript material and the manuscript tradition. Its results and achievements can be judged only by a standard of its own.' (p. 1, 98, 228)

The reason for this is to be seen in the fact that the Mahābhārata manuscripts are teeming with interminable divergences, which cannot accrue, if the single, uniform source of all the manuscripts were handed down in the normal manner. In other words, the manuscriptal divergences are irreconcilable with the assumption of a simple and straightforward transmission of the archetype. They are due chiefly to three causes, initial fluidity of the text, intentional redactorial alterations, and subsequent mutual contamination or conflation.

(1) Oral versions proliferated both before and after the scriptal fixation took place. 'All the difficulties in the explanation of this phenomenal variation vanish, as soon as we assume that after its composition, the great epic was for centuries handed down (in different forms and sizes) from bard to bard originally by word of mouth. That would explain, without any strain or violence, the existence of the mass of variants, of differences in sequence, and of additions or omissions.—It is moreover extremely probable that even after the text had been written down, large portions of it, especial-



ly such portions as were popular, continued to be committed to memory by itinerant raconteurs for purposes of recitation..... The assumption of such complicated derangement beyond the normal vicissitudes of transmission, is necessary to account for the abnormal discrepancies and strange vagaries of the Mahābhārata manuscript tradition. In other words, we are compelled to assume that even in its early phases the Mahābhārata textual tradition must have been not uniform and simple but multiple and polygenous.' (p. 1)

(2) The factor of intentional redactorial tempering should also be mentioned. 'The Vulgate has been purged by the continuous emendation of scholars for centuries. A whole army of anonymous scholars and poets must have worked at the text to make it smooth and easy of comprehension.' The solecistic and archaic nature of the old, received text was sought to be done away with by the redactors. '..... many an authentic archaism had been gradually ousted in the course of transmission of the text.' The same is true of interpolations, which found their way into the old text 'to increase its popularity and usefulness by adding to it interesting anecdotes, incorporating into it current and popular versions and explanations, bringing it in a line with the ethical, moral, religious and political ideas of essentially different ages.' (p. 130).

(3) 'To complicate matters further, there appears to have followed a long period in the history of the Mahābhārata, in which there was a free comparison of manuscripts and extensive mutual borrowings (at pilgrim-places), operations, which in the course of indiscriminate crossing and re-crossing have completely confused the differentiae, and produced a perfect wilderness of hybrid types.' (p. 2, 100)<sup>3</sup>

3. Sukthankar has beautifully depicted at several places the peculiar character of the Mahābhārata manuscript tradition with its obfuscating mass and mixture of versions making the Mahābhārata text-critical problem so intricate. 'In the Mahābhārata manuscript tradition, perhaps as in any literary tradition, the textual critic is faced with a bewildering profusion of versions as also with an amazing mixture of versions. Contrary tendencies have been at work in the evolution of the text. While on the one hand, some elements have been working from the earliest times for the development of different types; on the other hand, there were not wanting elements that operated against the evolution of sharply differentiated types. To understand the phenomenon of this luxuriant growth and confusion of versions, one must appreciate certain details of historical moment, certain special factors in the transmission of the Mahābhārata, which distinguish our work from every other known text except the Rāmāyaṇa and perhaps other similar ancient epopees.' (p. 99, p. 1) 'The critical apparatus is a veritable labyrinth of complicated and intermingled versions, ..... We have unfortunately no single thread to guide us out of the maze, but rather a collection of strands intertwined and entangled and leading along divergent paths. With the epic text as preserved in the extant Mahābhārata manuscripts, we stand, I am fully persuaded, at the wrong end of a long chain of successive synthesis of divergent texts, carried out — providentially — in a haphazard fashion, through centuries of diaskeuastic activities.' (p. 104)



To sum up: '.....the Mahābhārata is not and never was a fixed, rigid text, but a fluctuating epic tradition, a *thème avec variations*, not unlike a popular Indian melody. .... Ours is a problem in textual dynamics, rather than in textual statics.' (p. 128) 'Now, it goes without saying that the genetic method, operating with an Archetype and a *stemma codicum*, cannot strictly be applied to fluid texts and conflated manuscripts. .... A careful study of the critical notes will show ..... that all the problems which present themselves for solution in editing any text from manuscripts are present in the case of the Mahābhārata on a colossal scale and in an intensified form.' (p. 104)

It would be worthwhile at this point to ascertain Sukthankar's view regarding the one-time existence of the written archetype of the Mahābhārata manuscripts. The postulate of the parent archetype is the sheet-anchor of the science of Text-Criticism. The question arises particularly because of the possible doubt created by his statements such as, 'Our objective should consequently not be to arrive at an *archetype which practically never existed*.' (p. 128) Notwithstanding such statements apparently impugning the existence of the Mahābhārata archetype, it can be shown on several grounds that Sukthankar did acknowledge the same.

His many statements categorically affirm the existence of a common and original source of the manuscripts. On p. 7, he posits the Ur-Mahābhārata on the basis of the concordance of S & K recensions, which are in all likelihood mutually independent and free from 'secondary interrelationship'. The agreement of these sub-archetypes can therefore, be regarded as 'primitive',<sup>4</sup> which means that they are primarily connected through the Ur-Mahābhārata. Sukthankar observes, 'Such extensive agreements, in petty verbal details, must necessarily be, in the main, an original inheritance.' (p. 70) Again, 'Notwithstanding these and other discrepancies, there persists throughout, between the recensions, a distinct and undeniable family resemblance, and there cannot be the slightest doubt that they both spring from a common source.' (p. 48) Sukthankar very positively states, '..... it would be, in my opinion, far easier and more natural to assume that the contradiction was already present in the *archetype*, before the bifurcation of recensions ..... ' (p. 232) '..... though we might regard the original epic as a more or less homogeneous work, the

4. 'Nevertheless—it is all the more remarkable, that, while the Kāśmīrī and the the Southern versions so often agree in their readings, they do not agree as regards the additions peculiar to these versions. This is indeed a very strong argument for the 'primitive character of their concordant readings'.'—Winternitz, "The Critical Edition of the Mahābhārata: Adiparvan," ABORI, XV, 170.



*archetype* of our manuscripts already contained some inconsistencies and contradictions.' (p. 233)

These positive statements are further strengthened by three proofs which need not be elaborated. They are based on (1) his method of classification of the manuscriptal materials with a *stemma codicum* or a pedigree of the recensions and versions, (2) his text-critical practice by which he attempted to reconstitute an ancestral text of the Mahābhārata manuscripts both in the matter of textual details and textual passages, 'that will explain this phenomenal wealth of divergent and conflicting texts and justify it.' (p. 97), (3) his text-critical result in which the unification of the tradition or a restoration of the most ancient form of the text has been achieved to a very large extent.

The above four arguments with regard to Sukthankar's text-critical theory, practice, goal, and result conclusively testify to his acceptance of the primal, unitary archetypal source,<sup>5</sup> from which all the manuscriptal ramifications have emerged and to which all diversity is to be retraced.

On the other hand, the Mahābhārata manuscripts are fraught with countless variations. The conventional notion of an archetype as the basis of only clerical-copyistic errors (the normal vicissitudes of transmission), is not adequate to account for such a vast variety of variants. Hence Sukthankar asserted that the archetypal text subsequently came to be plentifully modified by the meddling freedom which the secular textual tradition always permitted. There are three constituents of the entire phenomenon of epic transmission: (1) the *post-archetypal* or *pre-recensional* oral fluctuations, (2) the deliberate alterations which the redactors allowed themselves on all hands, (3) the later confusions of the manuscripts. In our manuscripts, which represent the end-product, is consolidated the original text as worked upon by the free redactional dynamism, both oral and written. In function of this *initial fluidity* and subsequent fertility of the epic tradition Sukthankar rightly described the Mahābhārata text-criticism as a problem *su generis*, uniquely complex and complicated, rendering the complete accessibility to our erstwhile archetypal text impossible. In other words, we cannot retrace the entire manuscriptal contents to the

5. Incidentally, it is interesting to see that the manuscript tradition of the sister epic, the Rāmāyana also reveals the same state of affairs in regard to the Archetype. 'The N and S recensions, although they widely differ from one another, have preserved in an appreciable measure a common text of the Rāmāyana—a feature which compels us to accept a source for both of them, the Ur-Rāmāyana. .... The remarkable agreement between NE and NW points to an Arche-type derived from the original, while the divergence is due to local factors.'—G. H. Bhatt, *The Bālakāṇḍa: The Vālmiki Rāmāyana* (Baroda, 1960), p. 30.



archetype. There is no 'complete concatenation of copies finally reaching back to a single archetype.' (p. 2)

We would conclude this point with Sukthankar's own manifold expressions. 'The conflation of codices may have been carried to such an extreme that we may even have to renounce all pretensions to disentangle completely, by means of pure objective criteria, their intricate mutual-relationship.' (p. 2) '..... The different versions are interwoven in such an intricate manner that to disentangle them with complete assurance or to one's complete satisfaction, is not yet possible or perhaps is no longer possible.' (p. 200) It is useless to think of reconstructing a fluid text in a literally original shape, on the basis of an archetype and a *stemma codicum*.' (p. 108) 'We can only reconstruct the original, approximately by comparative methods. .... The ultimate problem is to unify as far as possible this manuscript tradition.' (p. 97) 'We must clearly recognize that a wholly certain and satisfactory restoration of the text in its pristine form—even the so-called *śatasāhasrī saṃhitā* form—may be a task now beyond the powers of criticism.' (p. 2, 104) 'Follow the course of these divergent streams as far back as one will, the elusive ('a distant and somewhat nebulous') source seems to recede still further and lose itself in the mists of antiquity.' (p. 48) 'We seem entitled to assert (that) notwithstanding the existence of what may be termed *original doublets* (fluctuations inherited from a period of purely oral transmission), as well as a vast number of secondary variants (brought in through corruption and emendation, during the period of mainly written transmission), that despite the vagaries which surround a small part of the poem with a haze of uncertainty, the unification of the tradition could, in regard to the major part of the epic, be carried to a degree of approximation which may be deemed sufficient for all intents and purposes.'<sup>6</sup> (p. 2)

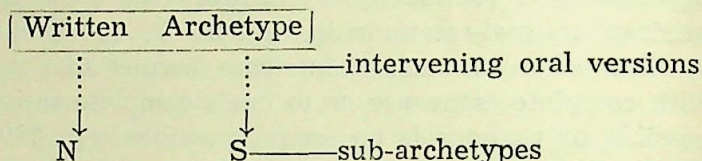
*Sukthankar's thesis of 'original doublets':*

At this juncture it would be appropriate to elucidate specifically the most vital part of Sukthankar's thesis, which also constitutes a point of great import in the Mahābhārata text-criticism. It is in regard to what he calls *original doublets*, inherited from a period of *purely oral* transmission. It is precisely the uncertainty due to these irreducible doublets (coupled with the later manuscriptal contaminations) that thwarts our endeavour to reconstitute the archetype

6. Says F. Edgerton, 'It is no doubt true that the peculiar nature of Mahābhārata tradition makes it exceptionally hard, even as compared with other Indian texts, to get at a really 'original' text. To do this in all details is, we may grant, probably forever impossible. We shall probably never get much nearer to that desideratum. The constituted text is the nearest approach to the original.' (JAOS, XLVIII, 187.)



fully.<sup>7</sup> The direct precursor of our recensions are the floating oral traditions dominated by the peripatetic bards who took possession of the epic in the period following the scriptal fixation.<sup>8</sup> It means that these oral versions gave birth separately and independently to the two recensional sub-archetypes of N and S, which were their direct descendants.



This is based on Sukthankar's significant words, '*Both recensions are in final analysis, independent copies of an orally transmitted text.*' (p. 99)

The whole argument of Sukthankar can be explained as follows: In a large majority of cases we can and do reconstruct the parental archetype of our manuscripts. Those parts are *directly* derived from it. Hence in general, the search for one original archetypal text is justified and must be carried out along the usual text-critical lines. The incompleteness or approximateness of archetypal reconstruction is only in those parts where no final and definite text-critical solution can be reached owing to the unbridgeable discordances too radical to permit a genetic reduction. Sukthankar has given several instances of such *original doublets* on p. 115. The two sets of 'alternative variants of equal intrinsic merit neither of which can have come from the other, which are but paraphrases of each other, and between which it is impossible to discriminate', are in an evenly balanced conflict. Such cases of equal intrinsic probability are indicated by the use of wavy line in the Critical Edition. Consequently, these unconverging divergences necessitate an assumption of an extra source in the form of independent oral versions preceding the cleavage of the two recensions and interrupting the written continuity of the tradition stemming from the written archetype.

7. 'If it were the alternating divergence and convergence alone of the versions, the editor would have a chance of finding his way through them upto the objective in view. But, when the versions begin to run parallel, smooth in their own channels without coinciding, the reconstruction becomes only partial. The manuscripts do not permit a clear view of the common source.' —Raghu Vira, *The Virāṭaparvan* (Poona, 1936), p. 26.
8. 'It is moreover extremely probable that even after the text had been *written down* (i.e. the archetype), large portions of it, especially such portions as were popular, continued to be committed to memory by itinerant raconteurs for purposes of recitation. It was then inevitable that the protean oral tradition should in one form or another react on the written tradition and vice versa. Whenever and wherever the text was *then* (i.e. recensions) written down.....these transmissions by word of mouth must have contaminated the written text and introduced innumerable variations in it.' (p. 1)



*Our Criticism:*

To clear our position at the outset, we do not deny the fact of later manuscriptal intermixtures. Our contention is only against the point of *initial fluidity*, i.e. the intervention of a period of *purely oral* traditions interrupting the flow of the written archetypal tradition, and regarded as giving rise to the *original doublets*. Our reasoning is as follows:—

(1) Post-archetypal period of purely oral transmissions is unproven:—

There could not be only oral traditions after the written archetype. Since the written archetype commenced the system of writing, it is natural that it thrived. Nevertheless we may not altogether rule out the possibility of the oral traditions continuing to crop up subsequently for popular purposes. But this growth of oral versions would only be peripheral and collateral of the written tradition. In that case, they would be co-recensional and not pre-recensional, and so the continuity of written tradition is not broken.

(2) The post-archetypal oral versions would give rise to similar variants because of their common source:—

Sukthankar resorted to the explanation of disparate oral sources to account for the dissimilar variants in the two recensions. But the post-archetypal oral versions cannot be absolutely mutually unrelated. They would rather be cognate traditions, because they have a common lineage from the written archetypal source. So, the kindred oral versions cannot logically be expected to have given rise to the *original doublets* but to similar variants, because of the common source.

(3) In general, pre-recensional oral versions are not indispensable to explain the doublets:—

The recensional divergences in question can be sufficiently accounted for by taking recourse to the untrammelled post-archetypal redactorial improvements, further confused by mutual comparisons and transcriptions of the manuscripts. The Mahābhārata redactors are not silent, passive recipients of the text. They have tirelessly worked upon and tampered with their *Textus Receptus*. Hence we have no criterion to determine when exactly the divergences admit of factor over and above the commonly accepted dynamic freedom of the redactors. The assumption of extra oral versions therefore becomes superfluous in explaining the existence of recensional differences, howsoever great.

(4) Specifically the written redactorial dynamism accounts for the doublets:—



Most importantly, we take issue with Sukthankar's hypothesis of antecedent oral versions by asserting that the so-called *original doublets* are not really original, i. e. independent and parallel manifestations or oral versions. On a critical comparison of those North and South recensional disagreements, we find that they are resolvable. There is no need to assume an intermediary period of oral transmissions to explain those vagaries. The patent written redactorial dynamism explains their occurrence. Hence, there is in fact no break in the continuity of the written tradition.

We now proceed to launch upon the most crucial aspect of our study, wherein are critically and elaborately scrutinised the typical samples of doublets given by Sukthankar on page 115. What follows is a concrete discussion of those knotty cases indicating that they are explicable by a wilful redactorially improving activity.

(N.B.:—Sukthankar has given only the problem-texts for brevity's sake; we have given the śloka-context. Again, for convenience of analysis and argument, these text-cases are given in their logical order (with respect to their greater clearness and certainty) as different from their textual order given by Sukthankar on p. 115).

N	S
(1) 65,20	
<i>tapyamānaḥ kila purā</i>	<i>tapyamānas tapo ghoram</i>
<i>viśvāmitro mahat tapaḥ</i>	<i>viśvāmitraḥ sakhā mama</i>
<i>subhṛśaṃ tāpayāmāsa</i>	<i>kampayāmāsa devendraṃ</i>
<i>śakraṃ suragaṇeśvaram</i>	<i>purā śakraṃ mahātapāḥ</i>

As is evident, S improves practically every word. As regards style, the sparated "*tapyamānaḥ...tapaḥ*" of N are brought together, which is obviously better. "*mahat*" is changed into "*ghoram*". "*kila*" is dropped as it is just a "*pūraṇa*", and so as to make room for "*sakhā mama*" (which N would never suppress, if there!). "*purā*" is rightly retained, but better placed. But the most striking change is seen in "*kampayāmāsa*" from "*subhṛśaṃ tāpayāmāsa*". "*mahat tapaḥ*" is made by S into the epithet "*mahātapāḥ*" of Viśvāmitra, and neatly put at the opposite end of the śloka. Thus S clearly produces a much more graphic effect of Indra's condition by putting "*kampayāmāsa*". Indra is not only caused pain or troubled, but actually shaken. All these facts show undoubtedly that S is unoriginal and improving on the N-text, which is primitive and archetypal. A redactorial change from S to N is psychologically unthinkable. But the change of the archetypal text (N) into S could have and quite obviously has taken place.



(2) 66,9

<i>jātam utṣṛjya taṃ garbhaṃ</i>	= —————
<i>menakā mālinīm anu</i>	= —————
<i>kṛtakāryā tatas tūrṇaṃ</i>	<i>śakrasaṃsadam āgacchat</i>
<i>agacchac chakrasaṃsadam</i>	<i>kṛtvā kāryaṃ śacīpateḥ</i>

Here also S clearly improves style and removes cacophony and unpleasant *saṃdhis*. In the first place, “*kṛtakāryā*” is clarified by “*kṛtvā kāryaṃ śacīpateḥ*”. Again, “*āgacchat*” is certainly more appropriate than mere “*agacchat*” (as some N-manuscripts also feel). And lastly, “*tūrṇaṃ*” is very understandingly eliminated by S in order to show that Menakā goes away without unmotherly haste. The foregoing ślokaṣ require this meaning. Besides, it must make room for the significant “*śacīpateḥ*”. The same is the case with “*tataḥ*” in N, which is superfluous and even rather misleading, because it looks as if it is a new sentence. Thus S is again showing itself to be clarifying-correcting. It is S that improves on N; N obviously cannot be an improvement on S. Hence N is original.

(3) 200,9

<i>atha teṣūpaviṣṭeṣu</i>	<i>teṣu tatropaviṣṭeṣu</i>
<i>sarveṣu eva mahātmasu</i>	<i>pāṇdaveṣu mahātmasu</i>
<i>nāradaḥ tv atha devaṛṣir</i>	<i>āyayau dharmarājaṃ tu</i>
<i>ājagāma yadṛcchayā</i>	<i>dṛṣṭukāmo' tha nāradaḥ</i>

S again clearly improves N stylistically speaking: the clumsy double “*atha*” is avoided, as also the “*pūraṇa*” “*eva*” in b. As regards contents, it is still more clearly improving. Nārada did not arrive by chance, but with a definite intention to see Yudhiṣṭhira, which is more appropriate in the context because it heightens the greatness of Yudhiṣṭhira and by the epithet “*dharmarāja*” justifies Nārada’s coming and desire to see him. Besides S is variously and obviously improving 200, 5-9 and adding a passage (App. 1.111, q.v.) which N would never suppress. Therefore, N is original and S secondary. The opposite is psychologically implausible.

(4) 65,35

<i>etāni yasya karmāṇi</i>	<i>etāny anyāni karmāṇi</i>
<i>tasyāhaṃ bhṛśaṃ udviḥ</i>	<i>bhṛśaṃ deva bibhemy aham</i>
<i>yathā māṃ na dahet kruddhas</i>	<i>yathā mām na dahet kruddhas</i>
<i>tathājñāpayā mām vibho</i>	<i>tathā paśya sureśvara</i>

Here, S clarifies “*udviḥ*” by “*bibhemi*”. Again S adds 10 pādas after 65,34 (598\*, 599\*), enumerating further exploits of the Ṛṣi. Hence “*etāni anyāni*” becomes a justification for addition. Or it could be a reference to the following possible exploits of Viśvāmitra in 36 and 37. Further, “*tathā paśya sureśvara*” of S improves



sense, since in addition to the occurrence of “*mām*” in the two pādas, it looks clumsy to say, “*yathā mām na dahet kruddhaḥ, tathā ājñapaya mām vibho*”. It is better to say, “you see (*paśya*) to it”. Thus all the variants combine to prove that S is derivative, and the opposite is implausible.

(5) 73,4

(3d: so <i>paśyata vane striyaḥ</i> )	=	_____
<i>krīḍantīnām tu kanyānām</i>	=	_____
<i>vane caitrarathopame</i>		<i>ārāme nandanopame</i>

S purposely varies “*vane*” of N by “*ārāme*”, because “*vane*” has already occurred in 3d. Thus S avoids “*punarukti*”, “*ārāme*” is better than “*vane*”; it specifically denotes “pleasure-garden”. None would change “*ārāme*” into “*vane*”. Moreover, “*nandana*” is more well-known than “*caitraratha*”. Such change is again confirmed by 73,5b where S improves a misunderstandable “*kanyāstāḥ*” into “*tāḥ kanyāḥ*”. So again S is improving, and the reverse is implausible.

(6) 1,51

<i>vividhaṃ saṃhitājñānam</i>	=	_____
<i>dīpayanti maṇṣiṇaḥ</i>	=	_____
<i>vyākhyātuṃ kuśalāḥ kecit</i>		<i>vyākhyāne kuśalāḥ kecit</i>
<i>granthaṃ dhārayituṃ pare</i>		<i>vyākhyāne kuśalāḥ kecit</i>

In this too, S puts in both pādas a more usual locative vs. the infinitive, with “*kuśala*” (cf. Speijer, *Sanskrit Syntax*, paras 124, 142). Again “*kecit*” is an improvement for variety’s sake on “*pare*”, since “*kecit-apare*” has occurred in the same position in the preceding 50ab. Not only that, S accommodates metrically his “*kecit*” in d, and very obviously produces a much more idiomatic and symmetrical line out of N’s. So again S is secondary and the other way is impossible.

(7) 60,9

<i>dakṣas tv ajāyatāṅguṣṭhād</i>	<i>āṅguṣṭhād dakṣiṇād dakṣaḥ</i>
<i>dakṣiṇāt bhagavān ṛṣiḥ</i>	<i>utpanno bhagavān ṛṣiḥ</i>

S clearly seems to be avoiding the conglomeration of obscuring *saṃ*-dhis. The syntactical and stylistic arrangement is made more pleasant and differentiated from the subsequent 60,10 (below). “*utpanno*” is vs. “*ajāyata*”. “*dakṣiṇāt dakṣaḥ*” is for the alliteration-effect and the etymological connection. Thus S is again secondary-improving. The reverse would be unnatural.

(8) 60,10

<i>vāmād ajāyatāṅguṣṭhād</i>	<i>maharṣes tasya bhāryā tu</i>
<i>bhāryā tasya mahātmanaḥ</i>	<i>vāmāṅguṣṭhād ajāyata</i>



There is certainly greater clarity and smoothness of word-order in S. "*vāmāṅguṣṭha*" is made clear. Again it is clarified that the "*bhāryā*" belongs to Dakṣa. "*tu*" (suppressed in 60,9a) cleverly connects "*vāmāṅguṣṭhat*" with "*dakṣiṇāt aṅguṣṭhāt*" of Brahmā (in 9a). And the samdhis in N are also cleared.—So, S is again correcting-clarifying and not N.

(9) 66,2

<i>athāpaśyat varārohā</i>	=	_____
<i>tapasā dagdhakilbiṣam</i>		<i>tapasogreṇa karṣitam</i>
<i>viśvāmitraṃ tapasyantaṃ</i>	=	_____
<i>menakā bhīrur āśrame</i>		<i>durdharṣaṃ saṃśītavratam</i>

Here S improves the sense in the Ṛṣi's honour by doing away with the idea of "*kilbiṣa*". There was no sin in the great sage! Further, his "*tāpas*" is rendered "*ugra*". In 2d also, S enhances the penitential power of Viśvāmitra (the pivot of the story!) by putting "*durdharṣaṃ saṃśītavratam*", in place of "*mēnakā bhīrur*". This fully confirmed by the obvious transposition-improvement made by S in the foregoing 1d (*vāyunā saha menakā*) for better effect. Thus it is logical to go from N to S, but implausible in reverse.

(10) 66, 3

<i>abhivādya tataḥ sā taṃ</i>	<i>tato' bhivādya sā tasmai</i>
-------------------------------	---------------------------------

S improves the word-order and also the style by employing the idiomatic dative with "*abhivādya*" in this circumstance of self-introduction. (cfr. Monier-Williams, s.v.)—This goes from N to S, but not vice versa.

(11) 54, 3

<i>jātamātras ca yaḥ sadya</i>	=	_____
<i>iṣṭyā dehaṃ avivṛdhat</i>		<i>vavṛdhe vedivattamaḥ</i>
<i>vedāṃs cādhiḥjage sāṅgān</i>	=	_____
<i>setihāsān mahāyaśāḥ</i>		<i>ītihāsāṃs ca sarvaśaḥ</i>

Here S introduces greater accuracy of facts, because "*ītihāsas*" do not belong to the Vedas like the Vedāṅgas. Therefore '*sa*' is dropped. And the universality of knowledge is brought out pertinently by "*sarvaḥ*" vs. the here colourless "*mahāyaśāḥ*". "*iṣṭyā dehaṃ avivṛdhat*" of N is quite meaningless, because the idea of Vyāsa's sudden



growth due to sacrifice (his own? at that age and stage?) is nowhere borne out in his legend. S understandably, though cheaply, corrects it into “*vedavittamaḥ*”.

This particular case deserves a further text-critical examination, since it involves a situation in which the S text need not be derived out of a clarification-improvement of the archetypal text usually represented by N. It can rather be an attempt to eliminate the senselessness of such a text. The N text has its authenticity in serious doubt because of its “*iṣṭyā*”, for which (as said above) there is no support anywhere in the story of Vyāsa. The S text cannot be the original one, because in that case N would have had no compelling reason to change it into its own incongruous “*iṣṭyā*”. The correction made by S is also not quite satisfactory because of its repetitive character in relation to pāda c.

The conclusion is that neither S nor N represents the original archetypal reading, though both can originate from the archetype. This only means that they can be the different results of a mislection of the blurred archaic text. Consequently we offer an emendation which reasonably accounts for both N and S readings.

*jātamātraśca yaḥ sadyo diṣṭyā deham avīṛdhat*

There is a likelihood of misreading here, since सद्योदिष्ट्या has the two confusable bars ण् , which are liable to haplography. Add to this the similarity of द and ङ. The two factors, the haplographic omission of a bar and the orthographic similarity of द and ङ would make it appear to be सद्योईष्ट्या in a blurred archetype. The N sub-redactor has conservatively copied (and possibly slightly rectified ī into i) the archetypal text and in so doing has corrected the now wrong saṁdhi in “*sadyo iṣṭyā*”, and has finally come up with “*sadya iṣṭyā*”. On the other hand, the S sub-redactor has redactorially and radically corrected the blurred archetypal text into his own “*vavṛdhe veda vittamaḥ*”.

“*diṣṭyā avīṛdhat*” has the advantage of being a well-known idiomatic Sanskrit expression, which is quite apposite in the context. Thus the emendated reading “*diṣṭyā*”, by virtue of the convergency of sense, context and graphy becomes the only logical basis and genetic explanation of the divergent readings of N and S, to both of whom it looked like “*iṣṭyā*”. This emendation proposed by us is not a fanciful one; it is actually based on the manuscript data, being documented by D<sub>3</sub>.

(And it may be pointed out only as a possibility that S could have derived from the archetype-misreading faithfully kept by N. If so, it makes for a smoother text-critical solution.)



(12) 57,30

<i>vāsavaḥ pañca rājānaḥ</i>	=	_____
<i>prthagvaṃśās ca śāśvatāḥ</i>		<i>sarve vaṃśakarāḥ prthak</i>

“ca” in N is confusing, as if referring to other kings. Moreover, S corrects, since the kings do not belong to different families, which is the apparent meaning of N, though actually the N-pāṭha intends to mean that the kings are the founders of different dynasties. Besides “sarve” explains the misunderstandable “śāśvatāḥ”. Hence, S clearly clarifies. So S is secondary and the reverse procedure is logically implausible.

(13) 106,9 (not 6—a misprint)

<i>kareṇvor iva madhyasthaḥ</i>	<i>gajarājaḥ karenṇubhyāṃ</i>
<i>śrīmān paurandaro gajaḥ</i>	<i>yathā madhyagatas tathā</i>

S improves syntactical construction. “madhyastha” is clarified by “madhyagata”. “madhyastha” frequently means “neutral” (cf. Pāṇ III, 2, 179, Schol.—quoted by Monier-Williams), which is not the case here. Here N seems to be elaborating S, owing to its “paurandaro gajaḥ”. But actually S does not like that, and rightly, because after all Indra’s elephant is not explicitly called “gajarāja”. S intends greater propriety of *upamā*, and would not be pleased merely with Indra’s elephant. Again it is the S-redactor that improves on the N-preserved text—and not the opposite.

(14) 1,23

<i>maharṣeḥ pūjitasyeḥa</i>	<i>maharṣeḥ sarvalokeṣu</i>
<i>sarvaloke mahātmanaḥ</i>	<i>pūjitasya mahātmanaḥ</i>

In this case there are in all, three parallel texts (vide Sukthankar’s remarks on p. 235),

*maharṣeḥ pūjitasyeḥa sarvaloke mahātmanaḥ* (1,23ab)  
*maharṣeḥ sarvalokeṣu viśrutasyāśya dhīmataḥ* (55,2ab)  
*maharṣeḥ sarvalokeṣu pūjitasya mahātmanaḥ* (56,12ab)

These are Northern texts. Only in 1,23 N has an unusual text. S has (in 1,23) the same as in 56,12ab, which latter is documented by both N and S in the same form. From this it seems that S variates the Northern text in 1,23, for the sake of consistency and uniformity. It is not only that; the Southern text (which is also the Northern in 55,2ab and 56,12ab) with “sarvalokeṣu” clearly ascribes greater glory to the great sage Vyāsa than N with “iha sarvaloke” narrowing the eulogy. Hence here also S changes the contents of the N-text for improvement. A change by N in the reverse direction is impossible.



(15) 107,23 (not 20)

N

tatas tām̐s teṣu kuṇḍeṣu  
garbhān avadadhe tadā  
svanugupteṣu deṣeṣu  
rakṣām̐ ca vyadadhāt tataḥ (21)

śasāsa caiva bhagavān  
kālenaitāvatā punaḥ  
vighaṭṭanīyāny etāni  
kuṇḍānīti sma saubalīm (22)

ity uktvā bhagavān vyāsaś  
tathā pratividhāya ca  
jagāma tapase dhīmān  
himavantam̐ śiloccayam (23)

jajñe krameṇa caitena  
teṣām̐ duryodhano nṛpaḥ  
janmatas tu pramāṇena  
jyeṣṭho rājā yudhiṣṭhiraḥ (24)

S

tatas tām̐s teṣu kuṇḍeṣu  
garbhān sarvān samādadhāt  
svanugupteṣu deṣeṣu  
rakṣām̐ caiṣām̐ vyadhāpayat (21)  
śasāsa caiva kṛṣṇo vai  
garbhānām̐ rakṣaṇam̐ tadā  
(1138\*)

uvāca caiva bhagavān  
kālenaitāvatā punaḥ  
ghaṭamāneṣu kuṇḍeṣu  
jātān jānīhi śobhane (22)  
ahnottarāḥ kumārās te  
kuṇḍebhyas tu samutthitāḥ  
(1139\*)

tenaivaiṣām̐ krameṇāsīt  
jyeṣṭhānujyeṣṭhatā tadā  
janmataś ca pramāṇena  
jyeṣṭhaḥ kuntīsuto, bhavat  
(= 24)!

evaṁ saṁdiśya kauravya  
kṛṣṇadvaipāyanas tadā  
jagāma parvatāyaiva  
tapase saṁśritavrataḥ  
(1140\* for 23)!

S transposes 23 and 24 putting 1140\* for 23 of N, inserts 1138\* and 1139\* and omits ślokaś 25-37 from this context and reads them after 114, 14. For 25ab S substitutes 1143\*. It is impossible not to see—on a careful scrutiny of the S-text—that S is muddling-meddling with the type of text represented by N, which has a greater originality and primitiveness. In this context, N also tries his hand at amplification (cf. 1142\*, 1144\*, 1146\*, 1148\*), but not in the persistent way of S. In the first place the clearly unnatural inverted position of 23 (=1140\*) and 24 shows that. Again, the (original) text indicates the evil omnia connected with Duryodhana's birth. The order of N shows a more natural naive-epic arrangement by putting the omnia here, when Duryodhana's birth is first mentioned in the natural sequel. Whereas S wants to have the omnia in connection with those happening at the birth of the Pāṇḍavas, especially of Bhīma (in adhy. 114). But there Duryodhana is out of place, since the story is concerned directly and exclusively with the Pāṇḍavas.



Leaving aside the stanza-order, the N-text cannot be derived from the S-text even as regards word-variants. With reference to śloka 21, if we compare N and S parallel texts, it becomes at once clear that S improves upon N, on account of the change of “*avadadhe*” into “*samādadhat*”, and of “*vyadadhāt*” into “*vyadhāpayat*”. Both (and “*sarvān*”) are obviously in order to avoid (metrically) the clumsiness of the three “*tataḥ*” + “*tadā*” + “*tataḥ*” in one śloka of N. And “*caiṣām*” clearly clarifies in S. Besides, 1138\* of S is obviously superfluous and repetitive; it is incredible that the original narrator could compose it as it is in S. He has taken over “*śaśāsa*” of 22 of N and is therefore forced to put “*uvāca*” in his 22. If “*uvāca*” were original, N had no reason to change it into its “*śaśāsa*”, when he continues with “*ityuktvā*” in 23. And again the tense-sequel and the sense in 22cd + 1139\* of S is violently unnatural. 1139\* betrays the patching after-thought, as if in order to round off the information about the Kauravas. Moreover, the introduction of Yudhiṣṭhira in 24 looks abrupt and incongruous in the S-text as against the N. And even there the change from “*jyeṣṭho rājā yudhiṣṭhiraḥ*”, which is less pertinent here (on account of “*rājā*”) into “*jyeṣṭhaḥ kuntisutaḥ*” is forced on S, because it has suppressed “*dur̥yodhanaḥ nr̥paḥ*” in 24b (N) and so “*rājā yudhiṣṭhiraḥ*” has to be done away with. Further, the transposition of 23 and 24 obviously necessitates the change of “*ityuktvā*” into “*evam̐ sam̐diśya*” and “*tathā*” into “*tadā*”. The reverse is not possible. Again, S is variating the mention of Vyāsa in the preceding 1137\* and 1138\* together with 22a (“*mahān ṛṣiḥ*” and “*kr̥ṣṇaḥ*” and “*bhagavān*”). So here also it again variates by putting “*kr̥ṣṇadvaiṇāyanaḥ*” and avoiding another “*bhagavān*”. The dative (“*parvatāya*”) read by S in its 1140\* is quite acceptable classically, (cf. Speijer, Sanskrit Syntax, para 79). “*gam*” with dative is used in the sense of ‘going towards’ as against accusative which is used in the sense of ‘actually reaching’. S is also clearly uniformising the dative construction (“*tapase*” + “*parvatāya*”). Moreover, he improves “*dhīmān*” into the context-fitting “*sam̐sit-avrataḥ*”. As regards the solitary case of “*himavantaṃ śiloccayam*” (N) vs. “*parvatāya*”, it looks at first sight that N improves on S by specifying; but all the other differences in the śloka indicate a clear improvement in S vs. N as is here shown. Hence it is S who feels he can drop “*himavantaṃ śiloccayam*” for “*parvatāya*”, because it is well-known which is the mountain where Vyāsa dwells teaching the Vedas to his disciples. Hence though it is not impossible that S in this one detail might be more primitive, it can confidently be said that it is implausible that it should be so, looking to the whole context. Even such a small detail as the change of “*tu*” (of N) into “*ca*” (of S) in 24 is a sign of deliberate redactorial improve-



ment by S, for he obviously thinks that there is no reason to say “*janmataṣ tu*” as if the Kauravas had a different seniority-standard than “*janma*”; hence “*ca*”. But actually N keeps the original (even if clumsily expressed) opposition; Duryodhana was the first among the Kauravas *but* the eldest by birth among all was Yudhiṣṭhira. Yet the rhythm prevented N from saying (as it would be natural) “*jyeṣṭhaṣ tu janmataḥ pramāṇena*”. Hence the attempt at improvement by S of what is in N only a versifying twist, which can cause no misunderstanding, because it comes after “*jajñe duryodhano*”. But in S that is suppressed—hence the need for the clarification in “*ca*”. Thus in all these divergences between N and S, it is easy to find a rationale to show how and why S has changed the N-text (which is to all intents and purposes archetypal)—while the reverse process would be psychologically-logically unviable. Some of the changes made by S (such as the idea of “*ahnottarāḥ*” and “*jyeṣṭhānujyeṣṭhatā*” in 24) are good enough and so N would not plausibly suppress them if original, but rather adopt them. Thus it is that we can say that S builds on the N-type text, which is archetypal-primitive (at least more closely than S). It might be asked whether precisely in view of the unsatisfactory nature of the S-text, it could not be argued that N improves on it (or on a text-form similar to it). The answer is in the negative. The S-text does not simply appear as more imperfect or incomplete, but as an artificial and unnatural attempt at improvement against the natural trend of the story and against the very wording of the passages involved. It can be justly said that all indications (shown above) converge to manifest that it is S who is improving on a N-like text. The reasons pointed out prove that the superior nature of the N-text is due to its greater original naturalness and freshness in this particular context. Any details that might possibly be interpreted as a secondary improvement by N are mere stray occurrences. They lose their plausibility before the weightage of convergence of the reasons that speak for the opposite course.

### Result:

In all these examples, it has all along been observed that S improves and embellishes for rather obvious reasons upon a less satisfactory (according to S) but primitive-original text represented by N. The opposite direction (S>N) of change cannot be shown to be psychologically plausible. It is S which, on account of its manifestly improving trend, can be genetically-redactorially derived from N (or from a form very near to N). Thus Sukthankar, in accepting the Northern text (though with a wavy line) in all the above cases—and similarly in many more—was more correct than



even he could grant.<sup>9</sup> And the important point to note is that even if S cannot always and infallibly be shown to be derived from N, but vice versa, our fundamental point of argument remains unshaken. Our aim is only to show that these recensional doublets are not derived from pre-recensional independent oral sources, but can be directly traced to one single common *written* archetypal source. Hence they cannot strictly be called original or alternative readings; they stand in the relationship of original and secondary. These doublets are really doublets. That is to say that these pairs of N and S readings have more or less similar content; they are not totally divergent in meaning or expression. Hence the secondary readings are actually the similar results of an archetypal-original reading (represented by N or even S), which becomes the basis of free redactorial modifications on the recensional level.

If, as shown above, the divergent variants are derivable from one another's present written form, how much more naturally can they be derivable from an archetypal source? In the above cases, S is shown to come from an original represented by the N-text, which is—as far as we know—archetypal. Now, even if the N-text were only a nearer approach to the original archetypal text (because of its own possible minor changes), we have been able to show S to be logically derivable from it. Then how much more would it be possible to show S as derivable from the unretouched archetypal text from which it directly derived? And vice versa, we could argue in the cases in which N is derivable from a S-represented form.

Thus, the so-called original doublets are reconcilable by a deeper text-critical scrutiny, howsoever irreducible their divergences apparently may be. As shown above, cases of extravagant vagaries of the recensions are more often than not redactorially traceable to one single source. They are not the products of *fluid oral* agencies. The point is, the redactorial dynamism is shown to have extended its freedom just as far as the oral versions are supposed to have exercised it—all the more since we actually witness later versional sub-redactors taking liberties with their own parent sub-archetypes. So why multiply the causal factors by postulating extra oral versions, when the one well-attested written dynamism alone can suffice? The assumption of independent parallel oral versions is Sukthankar's inference made in order to explain certain anomalous manuscriptal facts. He averred that such major recensional differences could not be the outcome of the mere dynamic freedom of the redactors operating upon the archetype, but demanded another ex-

9. Sukthankar says, 'I have, for the sake of consistency and with a view to avoiding unnecessary and indiscriminate fusion of versions, adopted as a stop-gap, the reading of N.' (p. 115)



traneous factor. Instead, the above study has amply shown that they are susceptible to reasonable text-critical reducibility to an archetypal text as handled by the typical redactors at work in the Mahābhārata text transmission even in its initial stage. The hypothesis of pre-recensional oral fluctuations is redundant.

A greater and greater intensification and perfection of Sukthankar's own text-critical technique becomes capable of resolving genetically even such seemingly polaric divergences. The same holds good in the case of conflation which have brought about secondary variants. They can also often be disentangled by a rigorous and painstaking examination,—a thing which Sukthankar himself has done with singular success. A similar intensive text-critical investigation could be fruitfully undertaken for a further ascertainment of the uncertain wavy-line cases in the Critical Edition. 'When we consider the amount of oral tradition, and of contamination and blending of different streams, which has been the rule rather than the exception in the case, it is perhaps rather surprising to find such extensive and substantial agreements as seem to exist among the important and significant manuscripts. To put it otherwise, while variations and additions are indeed countless in number, it is almost a pleasant surprise to find that, after the skilful sifting of the editor relatively few important matters of doubt remain.'<sup>10</sup>

A failure to fully unravel the textual problems does not call for any intervening oral versions, but must only be attributed to the excess of redactorial latitude. Thus, even granting that we do get at times truly irresolvable cases, they must be regarded as due to especially refractory difficulty inherent in the redactorial activity. For, in these cases, both the recensional variants may be said to be secondary, even if we cannot accurately determine or discover their common form. It is possible that both the recensional redactors may have felt displeased with a particular unsatisfactory or clumsy text in the archetype and may have tried to edit it each in his own way. They would keep the substance but follow their own line of composition and wording. So, there may not be textual convergence. (And even here there is room for genetical emendation, as Sukthankar has rightly seen.) This explanation accounts for even irreducible doublets, by considering the ubiquitous written, redactorial dynamism. The upshot of all this is that no recension justifies its being considered as a separate transcript born of an oral agency, and not as a direct written descendant of the written archetype. There is no valid and exclusive proof for such a postulated oral descent, since the oral versions cannot be proved to have exist-

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10. F. Edgerton, *op. cit.*, pp. 187-88.



ed as the sole or *necessary* link between the archetype and the recensions. It may now be safely asserted that the Mahābhārata transmission was not "multiple and polygenous", or fluid and fluctuational in the initial post-archetypal stage.

#### *Final Conclusion:*

The consolidated result of our study is: In the matter of having to operate on the basis of an originally settled written archetypal text, the Mahābhārata text-criticism has to proceed along essentially the same lines as the Western Philological Criticism of classical texts. It is only in the way of attaining that goal that it is put to the necessity of differing (and even then in degree, though very widely,—rather than in kind) from the latter. It may always be kept present in our mind that the Mahābhārata is not a mechanical tradition, where only transmissional errors bar our way. Here we have a deliberate redactorial behaviour to reckon with. Yet there is no 'fluidity' in the original source of tradition, i.e. in the archetype,<sup>11</sup> nor in the tradition itself, in the sense that the protean oral versions need not have existed as dividing and separating the written archetype from the recensions, which are indeed *linearly* descended from it. It may be more or less difficult to reach the archetype in its pristine and precise form on account of the pre-eminently heterogeneous and multilateral character of the redactorial handiwork which gives rise at times to the most intractable cases, the *real* 'original doublets'. Yet it is not the pre-recensional oral versions that encumber our progress to the archetype. Hence we can no doubt call it an approximate or incomplete restitution of the plenary Ur-archetype. However, no amount of uncertainty in the restoration of some of the most difficult details can do away with the fact that the archetype is the *direct* and *immediate* matrix of our manuscripts. The Mahābhārata problem has to be tackled with the full assurance that ultimately all the manuscripts originate from the one primal source of the written archetype in an *unbroken* succession. F. Edgerton also affirmed that all our manuscripts are *directly* sprung from a common fountainhead. He says, 'It is quite true, as Sukthankar properly emphasises, that the reconstruction is not an Ur-Mahābhārata. This is sufficiently indicated by the inconsistencies and traces of discordant versions, which it contains. But I believe that it is to all Mahābhā-

11. 'Much has been said of the 'fluidity' of the Mahābhārata tradition. In a sense the term is justified. But it is dangerous to use it without definition.....If what is meant by 'fluidity' is that, before the establishment of this text, the ancestor of all our manuscripts, there were already different versions of the Mahābhārata stories, again I agree.....But this text itself was nothing fluid. ....I, on the contrary, have no doubt at all that every line of the text had once a definite precise form, even though we are now frequently uncertain about just what that form was. It is not an indefinite literature that we are dealing with, but a definite literary composition.—F. Edgerton, *The Sabhā-parvan* (Poona, 1944) p. 36.



rata manuscripts now accessible to us, approximately what the Alexandrian text of Homer is to the Homeric tradition since its time. That is, it is a text which once existed and from which all manuscripts are *directly* descended.<sup>12</sup>

### *The Nature of the Archetype:*

It would be pertinent at this stage to envisage the nature and the form of this Mahābhārata Archetype. This Arche-type or the first *written* copy is to be distinguished from the *oral* Ur-Mahābhārata, 'that ideal but impossible desideratum', which represents the 'original' state of the metamorphosis of Jaya and Bhārata into the Mahā-Bhārata. This 'Mahābhāratification' is a prolonged process of progressive augmentation during generations of rhapsodists. The original nucleus consisting largely of ancient heroic songs came to be interspersed with a ponderous mass of varied elements of an episodic, didactic and theologico-philosophical nature, derived from the floating popular literature composed independently in the pre-Ur-Mahābhārata period, like a stream originating in the distant mountains and slowly growing into a large river by various rivulets merging with it in its long course. As a consequence, the original Bhārata-kathā becomes a vast purāṇic literature, a gigantic aggregation of Ākhyānas and Upākhyānas, of heroic ballads, myths and legends, moral tales, fables and parables and other miscellaneous matter—a veritable *Mahā-Bhārata*. The Mahābhārata is both a saga of the Bhāratas, and a Smṛti, a Nītiśāstra, a Dharmaśāstra (*Epos+Rechtsbuch*). The latter, a result of Brāhmaṇization, was designed to serve a dual purpose of entertainment and edification. At the fag-end of the history of this *oral* development of the Ur-Bhārata into the Ur-Mahābhārata, comes the Ur-Archetype, when the repertory of the old bard poetry came to be fixed and written down. But the process of growth may not have stopped even then. Hence it is that *our* Archetype comprises all that is the Ur-Mahābhārata plus its redactional retouchings, which together make the text so diversified. Compared to the Archetype, the Ur-Mahābhārata (much more so, the Ur-Bhārata itself) ought to be a relatively shorter, simpler and possibly smoother, more consistent, more concordant, more homogeneous text. Sukthankar says, '.....though we might regard the original epic as a more or less homogeneous work, the Archetype of our manuscripts already contained some inconsistencies and contradictions.' (p. 233) Or as Edgerton says, 'It is quite true, as Sukthankar properly emphasises, that the reconstruction is not an Ur-Mahābhārata. This is sufficiently indicated by the inconsistencies and traces of discordant versions which it contains.'<sup>13</sup>

12. *ibid.*, p. 37.

13. *loc. cit.*



The author of the written Ur-Archetype, whom we may designate as the *First Archetypal Redactor* (FAR) is the one (it could be a whole redactorial syndicate also—say, the Bhārgava clan, as suggested by Sukthankar) that put together in a written form all the elements we find at present in the Mahābhārata which cannot be attributed to later interpolations. He took down all old orally received (Ur-Mahābhārata) matter and may have combined it with other foreign but current materials by adapting (or even newly composing and adding) them into the great whole that was thus made out of the original epic-bardic poem. In other words, he was continuing thereby the redactorial work already begun by his reciting predecessors from the days of the Ur-Bhārata through the Ur-Mahābhārata.

In the Mahābhārata Text-Criticism, the text and its redactor are two concomitant concepts. Accordingly, the FAR may even have had a successor-reviser of the Archetype-text itself, who may be styled the *Last Archetypal Redactor* (LAR). He is the final maker of our Archetype, the text that existed until the point of recensions, which now begin their redactorial careers. He is thus the direct ancestor of our manuscripts. The existence of two distinctly remarkable redactorial layers *within* the Archetype is not a mere possibility or an assumption, but a text-critically ascertained result, which—as it will be shown in Part II—is logically demanded for the full genetical explanation of the facts recorded in our manuscripts. So it follows that *even* the written archetypal text has undergone redactorial operations on it, so as to become ultimately a still more amorphous text-corpus. Actually, our Archetype, as deducible by us, is a conglomerate-composite text-critical product, disparate elements having contributed to its formation. To explain: The Archetype contains old Ur-Mahābhārata materials as redacted by the FAR *plus* new redactorial elements introduced by the LAR with the intention to improve the text before him. (His methods will be witnessed in the following chapters pertaining to the actual study of the text-critical problems.) The indiscriminate double transcription at times of both the suppressed original and the redactor's substitute by the kāyasthas, has made the Archetype reach us in a confused yet real condition. Thus, there are two text-critically discernible strata in the Archetype, one of the FAR, the 'incorporator' and of the LAR, the 'improver'. At first sight, this hotchpotch of the Archetype may be felt to be irksome and irritating to our modern taste, yet from a purely text-critical point of view, this very indiscriminateness of the scribes is our greatest gain, since it has preserved some remarkable rests of the original. It was the copyists who saved for us today some of the original matter, which the last redactor had possibly



bracketted. Our objective is precisely the depuration of this precious palimpsest. The epic text as it was, has been touched even in small details by the redactors at all levels, as they were reared in a sophisticated and classical tradition of Pāṇinian Grammar, to which the racy style of the epic poets with all its freshness and vigour was not very meaningful. As noted above, many an anacoluthon and solecism were straightened out as being archaic. This attitude incipient in the archetypal redactor (or redactors) went on growing in the later sub-redactorial agencies.

As luck would have it, those very men who had taken upon themselves the pious duty of transmitting the epic, have on the contrary, through their deleterious—though well-intentioned activities of skilful and unskilful handling of the text, often cut us off from our ancient kavis. Be it as it may, it is only the silent and selfless services of these indefatigable men, which should be credited with the protection, perpetuation and propagation of the epics and other ancient works in whatever state we have been fortunate to inherit them.

We saw that what was happening after the split into the recensions and versions had also been happening before. The Archetype of our manuscripts itself was already in a partially mixed state because of its having redactorial retouchings. These features within the body of the Archetype itself have also gone a long way in provoking the sub-redactors to do what we actually see them doing: stuffing and shuffling, substituting and suppressing. Thus the complex Archetype-text has also helped to engender further divergences in the manuscripts.

Yet, this very archetypal amalgam is the only real basis for any legitimate Higher Criticism, which aims at the restitution of the genuine-original Ur-Mahābhārata and the Ur-Bhārata. This written Archetype, with all its complexity, is the original text-critical entity of which everything else is the effect. To employ a philosophical nomenclature, the Archetype is the Pradhāna or the material cause of the emanation of the manuscripts and through it we aim to reach our goal of the primal Puruṣa, the Ur-Mahābhārata.

#### *Post-archetypal Stage*

With regard to this definitive and fixed product of the evolution of the Mahābhārata text, we have studied and discussed the difference of position between Sukthankar's thesis and ours (with Edgerton), and have arrived at the conclusion that there was one non-fluid (in itself) common written Archetype, from which all our manuscripts are directly and without interruption derived by scriptal transmission. The manuscripts are derived from it through successive steps of common



starting-points of recensions and versions created by the dynamic activities of the transmitter-folk. We shall now study this post-archetypal stage of the Mahābhārata textual evolution. The question that arises here is that of the division of the recensions and versions and their manuscriptal progeny.

### *Sukthankar's View:*

There are two branches of the archetypal tree, N and S, which are again divided (as shown in the *stemma codicum*) into numerous versions corresponding roughly to the different provincial scripts.

The two recensions on the whole have their own individual characteristics and proclivities, which go to distinguish them from each other. 'The Southern recension impresses us by its precision, schematization and thoroughly practical outlook. Compared with it, the Northern recension is distinctly vague, unsystematic, sometimes even inconsequent, more like a story rather naively narrated, as we find in actual experience.' (p. 48) The points of difference between the two are very elaborately and systematically recorded with illustrations by Sukthankar. (pp. 50-62) (They are far too numerous and diverse to be brought in here, and moreover, they are not essential to the main tenor of our thesis.) The significant point of note, however, is the disparity as regards purity and genuineness of the various versions comprising the two recensions. They are either long or short, more interpolational or less, archaic or normalized. It is this factor precisely that helps us to discriminate and determine their relative worth.

Sukthankar manifests a predilection, not unfounded however, for the Śāradā (ŚK) version. This version among all, deserves a special mention. It is the shortest (known) version and may be appropriately called the *Textus Simplicior*. "The high position of K seems confirmed by its being the shortest of the known versions." (p. 7) ".... with the possible exception of the Śāradā version, which appears to have been protected by its largely unintelligible script and by the difficulties of access to the province, all versions are indiscriminately conflated." (p. 104) "An unbiased comparative survey of the different versions leads one to the conclusion that the Śāradā version is certainly the best Northern version, and probably, taken as a whole, the best extant version of the Ādi, a conclusion not based on abstract considerations, but one that may be verified inductively and pragmatically." (p. 72) ".....it is a demonstrable fact that it contains relatively little matter that is not found at the same time, in all other versions of both recensions. It is clear, therefore, that



it must contain relatively less spurious matter than any other known version." (p. 62) "The text includes many archaic survivals in point of linguistic usage and shows what may fairly be regarded as "difficult reading". (p. 160) Impurity and contamination have no doubt crept into the Śāradā version too but to a small extent. It is owing to this unique feature of this version that Sukthankar regarded it as a trustworthy "norm" for his Critical Edition. "Shortest is oldest and therefore the best and purest", is Sukthankar's watchword.

This *mantra* of Sukthankar's text-criticism is inspired by a deep discernment of the nature of the Mahābhārata transmission history, and of the peculiar redactorial mentality underlying it. It constitutes his diagnosis of the *psychological* propensity of the epic redactors. What is then the attitude of these redactors towards their text? The answer is: The Mahābhārata has been taken by them as if it were a balloon to be bloated to any extent. "Everything points to the fact that what the epic has suffered from, is inflation and elaboration and not depletion or curtailment." (p. 8) "One need not be sceptical about the possibilities of such indiscriminate conflation and addition. . . . .parallel and even contradictory versions are placed quite unconcernedly side by side, regardless of the effect on the reader, regardless of the fact that sentences are left hanging in the air, that passages do not construe. Here one notices above all, the anxiety that nothing that was by any chance found in the Mahābhārata manuscript should be lost. Everything was carefully preserved, assembled in a picturesque disarray." (p. 103) "The text favoured by the ancients appears to have been of the inclusive, rather than of the exclusive type. (p. 101) Nilakaṇṭha at the beginning of his commentary on the *Sanatsujātīya* remarks, "*udiyogaparvaṇi sanatsujātīye bhāṣyakārādibhiḥ vyākhyātān sampratitanapustakeṣu ca sthitān pāṭhān ślokān ca guṇopasamhāranyāyena ekīkṛtya vyākhyāyate*". Nilakaṇṭha's guiding principle, on his own admission, was to make the Mahābhārata a "thesaurus of excellences". "To add small details here and there, embellishing and amplifying the original, would be merely a gentle and lowly service *ad majorem gloriam dei*." (p. 68) Thus the Mahābhārata has been susceptible to swelling in the course of centuries at the hands of the redactors.

This logically means that the ŚK version, which is relatively short, is preserved in its original extent (barring its sporadic interpolations) and is not an intentionally shortened version. There



could not be accidental omissions either, because the text is continuous. This means that any passage absent in ŚK is the result of a deliberate interpolation in the other versions, and therefore later. To cite the words of Sukthankar, "They cannot be intentional omissions,.....This Śāradā (Kāśmīrī) version of the Ādi is not an abstract or an adaptation. It claims to be the unabridged text in all its fullness, and I see no sufficient reason to doubt the *a priori* presumption that it is not an abridged version. The explanation that, primarily with the very object of excising what seems to us to be superfluous or repetitious matter, abridgement might have been intentionally made in the past by some Kāśmīrī redactor or a syndicate of redactors, would be a grotesque distortion of Indian literary and religious tradition. No one in the past found this epic text too long. Far from it. It was perhaps not long enough." (p. 68)<sup>14</sup> As a rule, thus, enlargement and not abridgement is, according to Sukthankar, the established order in the phenomenon of the Mahābhārata redactorial tradition.

Now exactly like this Śāradā in the North, is the Malayālam version belonging to the Southern extremity of India. Sukthankar says, "It is, in my opinion, the best Southern version. It is not only largely free from the interpolations of TG, but appears to be also less influenced by N than TG, wherein lies its importance for us." (p. 93) This means that it is comparatively less diluted by redactorial intrusion and less conflated. It is thus shorter and therefore older and purer. So M must coincide (for the most part) with ŚK. And actually it does. "This version has several striking agreements with Ś, a fact all the more impressive, because M, a Southern version, hails from the province at the opposite end of India from the province of Ś, a Northern version." (p. 95)

Sukthankar's canon of text-critical reconstruction of passages is an outcome of this root-principle. Since he had to reckon—as a general rule—with the possibility of interpolations and interpolations only, the basic principle of reconstruction is the concordance between the two (geographically) independent recensions, N & S. Hence the archetypal authenticity of those passages that come to us identically in all versions including the abovementioned shorter ones, is guaranteed. Sukthankar says, "The main principle under-

14. "There is not the slightest reason for assuming that the Śāradā text is an abridged version. Copyists of the epic text have never found it too long; on the contrary, they were always inclined to enlarge their text by any matter found in other local versions accessible to them..... We have no reason to assume that a passage omitted in a recension or version had been omitted from a desire to abridge the text."—Winternitz, *ABORI*, XV, 163, 174.



lying all speculations as to the authenticity is the postulated originality of agreement between what may be proved to be (more or less) independent versions. The principle I have tried to follow religiously—and I hope I have never deviated from it—is to accept as original a reading or feature which is documented uniformly by all manuscripts alike (N=S).” (p. 109) This forms so to say, “the pieces of firm bedrock in the shifting quicksands of Mahābhārata poetry”. (p. 114)

Consistently, Sukthankar says, “Our primary evidence being the manuscripts themselves, we are bound to view with suspicion, as a matter of principle, any part of the text, which is found only in one recension, or only in a portion of our critical apparatus. Therefore, the evidence of such passages as are contained only in one manuscript, or a small group of manuscripts or versions, or even in a whole recension, must be pronounced to be defective. Consequently, all lines belonging to one recension only, and *a fortiori* such as pertain to a combination of manuscripts amounting to less than a recension, for which there is nothing corresponding in the other recension and which are not absolutely necessary for the context—all lines, in short, with a defective title—have been placed in the footnotes or the Appendix.....” (p. 120) Again, “Unless there is overwhelming evidence to prove their originality, they should be treated as spurious; because, the probability of error is far greater in admitting as authentic such one-recension lines on insufficient evidence of originality than in rejecting them on insufficient evidence of spuriousness.” (p. 8)<sup>15</sup>

Correspondingly, Sukthankar has observed with regard to the passages which are well-documented but spurious-looking owing to their incongruity, “To resolve (such) anomalies, however, is beyond the scope of this edition, since the entire manuscript evidence unanimously supports the conflation, which is too old and deep-rooted to be treated by the ordinary principles of textual criticism. If we went about, at this stage of our work, athetizing such passages as were self-contradictory or as contradicted by the data of some other part of the epic, there would not be much left of the Mahābhārata to edit in the end.....Owing partly to the fluid character of the original and partly to the fragmentary and inadequate infor-

15. However, there are instances in the Anuśāsanaparvan where passages are admitted in the critical text (of course with wavy lines) even though only one recension supported them.

To illustrate: Omitted in the entire N—37.15<sup>e</sup>-16<sup>d</sup>.

Omitted in the entire S—32.18<sup>de</sup>; 65.48<sup>cd</sup>; 68.1<sup>ab</sup>; 83.47<sup>a</sup>-49<sup>b</sup>; 90.40<sup>ab</sup>; 94.23<sup>ab</sup>; 99.2<sup>c</sup>-4<sup>b</sup>; 119.16<sup>d</sup>-18<sup>c</sup>; 143.25<sup>c</sup>; etc.



mation we possess as regards the origin, growth and transmission of the text, it is incumbent on us to make *conservatism* our watchword." (p. 110)<sup>16</sup>

The enunciation of this concordance-rule makes it clear that the rock-bottom of Sukthankar's method of textual reconstitution of the passages, is his opinion that the Mahābhārata text transmission tends to display augmentation and amplification effected by the hands of its enthusiastic redactors to whom such a thing as cutting cannot be attributed. However, we must say that Sukthankar did not dogmatically annul the possibility of intentional expurgation of the received text by the Mahābhārata redactors. We may cite his observation concerning those who may be apt to regard a passage found in a particular isolated block of manuscripts, not as its spurious interpolation, but rather as an example of excision by the rest, "There is only one rational way of dealing with these *additional* passages (that is, passages found in only one of the rival recensions and rejected, "pending further inquiry regarding their credentials", p. 120): they must be carefully segregated from the rest of the text, and examined individually. The onus of proving the originality of these "additional" passages, will naturally rest on him who alleges the originality: the documents speak naturally against them, but their evidence is not by any means conclusive." (p. 246) "Such passages (as are placed in the footnotes and the appendix) are not all necessarily spurious. There might be a hundred good reasons why the questionable passages are missing in a particular recension or version. It might conceivably be, for instance, that the shorter recension represents "a mutilated and hastily put together composition of the Middle Indian Redactors, who could not lay their hands on all manuscripts of the Mahābhārata" (as said by P.P.S. Sastri). The shorter version might again be, theoretically, a consciously abridged or expurgated version.—But all these are mere possibilities.

16. Other rules of text-reconstruction: In case of fluctuations:

(1) "The choice fell—upon a reading documented by the largest number of—more or less independent versions, and which is supported by intrinsic probability. The presumption of originality in these cases is frequently confirmed by a lack of definite agreement between the discrepant versions."

(2) Occasionally there are "double" agreements. Here since both cannot be original and one of the two must be accidental, "either may be adopted, if they have equal intrinsic merit".

(3) "When the two recensions have alternate readings neither of which can have come from the other, and which have equal intrinsic merit (N:S) I have for the sake of consistency—adopted, as a stop-gap, the reading of N," with a wavy line, since "it is impossible to discriminate." (p. 114-5) Again, "When the above tests break down or when they give only a negative result, the expedient adopted by me was to find a reading which best explains how the other readings may have arisen." The true reading in this case has often proved to be a *lectio difficilior*. Lastly, "Emendation has played an inconspicuous role..... Interpretation has in general been given preference over emendation. Precipitate emendation is to be deprecated." (p. 116) We must abstain from effecting any change which is not in some measure supported by manuscript authority." (p. 109)



*All these reasons in general and particular must be adduced and proved or at least made probable, in any given case.....Omission is as much a fact in Mahābhārata textual tradition as addition. And it is fair to demand of a person who alleges the authenticity of such one-recension passages, why the rival recension does not contain it. The general condemnation of a recension or version, that it is mutilated merely on the ground that it lacks certain passages that are found in a rival recension or version, is entirely meaningless; for the argument might easily be reversed, so that the controversy will resolve merely into mutual vituperation.....The argument could have been employed with greater semblance of reason and plausibility, had there been only a mere plus or minus on either side but is entirely without cogency in the present instance where there are both additions and omissions on both sides." (p. 121, italics ours)<sup>17</sup>*

It will be in the fitness of things to conclude this very important point with the remarks of Dr. Heinrich Lüders, the pioneer

17. 'Unless we can find some other valid reason why a whole version should have omitted a passage, we have to assume that its omission is due to its having been added to the text in more recent times.'—Winternitz, *ABORI*, XV, 174.

"On one extremely important methodological point, I have gradually come, in the course of my work, to the position which entirely agrees with Sukthankar's procedure, but goes slightly further than his theory. This concerns the "plus or minus" passages; passages (long or short) which are entirely missing (with no equivalent substitutes) in one or more recensions. Sukthankar relegates such passages, almost without exception, to his Notes or Appendix, and does not admit them to the text, even when all recensions but one contain them. Yet he says that they are "not necessarily spurious. There might be a hundred good reasons why... (they) are missing in a particular recension." Well, I suppose there might conceivably be such reasons. As far as Book 2 is concerned, I can only say that I very gravely doubt the existence of such cases. I have come to believe that any passage, long or short, which is missing in any recension or important group of manuscripts as a whole, must be very seriously suspected of being a secondary insertion. For the Mahābhārata, I should now hesitate long before including any such case in the edited text. This was not a preconceived notion. Indeed I started with a quite different attitude. It is only long and careful study which has finally forced me to this conclusion (which, I take the liberty of saying, I believe is at least not far from Sukthankar's own view at present). I should now go so far as to assert that probably not one of the some fifty MSS. I have studied for Book 2, nor any of their genealogical ancestors, ever deliberately or intentionally omitted a single line of the text:..... And it appears that no scribe, no redactor, ever knowingly sacrificed a single line which he found in his original. Not even if he found something which seemed to him incomprehensible, inconsistent with the context, irreligious, or immoral. In that case he sometimes changed the text, doubtless feeling that a mistake had been made and that he was only doing the pious work of restoring what must have been the original intention. But there is certainly not a shred of evidence for a single deliberate omission; and I do not believe it ever took place. In general, therefore, I feel rather more confident than Sukthankar seems to have felt when editing Book 1, that we are following the original text in omitting, generally speaking, every line that is missing in any recension as a whole..... In other words, I believe that in general these are not "omissions" in the recension that lacks them, but secondary insertions in those that contain them, even though these latter may be what we must regard as generally independent versions."—F. Edgerton, *The Sabhāparvan*, pp. 34-35.



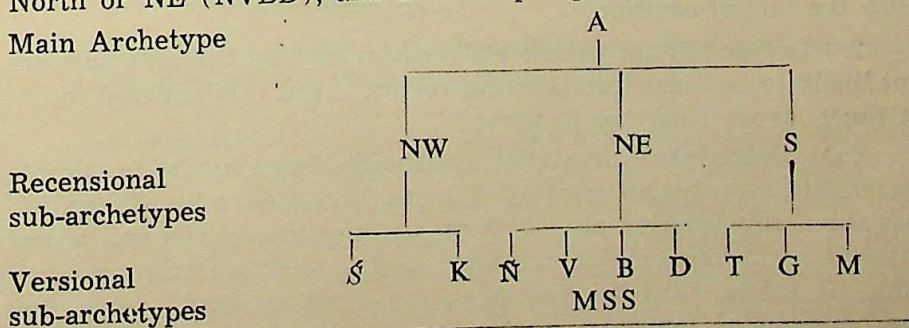
of Mahābhārata text-criticism (and the teacher of Sukthankar and also of Fr. Esteller). "Whatever may be our thoughts about the explanation of such differences within the Nāgarī recension, as far as the differences between the N & G"—(that is, *a fortiori* between N & S)—"are concerned, I consider it a completely correct principle—in the parts which in general agree verse for verse, as for example the text of the R̥ṣyaśṛṅga-legend—to hold a verse which is missing either in N or G as suspect, and if a reasonable motive for its addition appears, as interpolated. Whoever considers those verses genuine, is in duty bound to explain how it came to pass that they were omitted in one recension." (p. 121)

### Our View:

After noting the first point of clarification bearing upon the mode of classification of recensions, we shall proceed to examine the most important issue of the possibility of excision in the Mahābhārata manuscript tradition.

We feel we should not accept the mere geographical location as the guiding principle, but follow the logical rule: When classified under different captions, members belonging to the same category should be such as are pervaded by a qualitative commonness. Consequently, the Extreme-North or North-Western (NW) versions (Śāradā-Kāśmīrī) on the one hand do not seem to admit of being bracketted with the Centre-North or North-Eastern (NE) versions (Nepālī, Vaidehī, Bengālī, and Devanāgarī) on the other, on account of the manifold salient differences in their individual characters (which we shall see shortly). And in this we are guided by Edgerton who had stated, "But I consider that it would be more appropriate (at least for the Sabhāparvan) to assume *three independent* versions or streams of tradition instead of assuming only two recensions." "But, for *theoretical considerations*, it would be in my opinion more correct to proceed on the assumption of *three* more or less independent recensions rather than two."<sup>18</sup> Thus, in all probability at least, there was a trifurcation of recensions, or three splinters from the Archetype, Extreme-North or NW (ŚK), Centre-North or NE (ŅVBD), and S. Our pedigree is like this:—

### Main Archetype



18. *The Subhāparvan*, p. 9.



Coming to the point of *excision*, we admit wholeheartedly that Sukthankar—as the above citations clearly show—did not in theory exclude the possibility of intentional omission, but only set up the general rule that, unless conclusive proof is adduced to the contrary, the case for addition as against omission must be deemed to hold the upper hand. And this he does not maintain *a priori*, but as the result of a close observation of the trend of the Mahābhārata manuscript tradition. Thus, Sukthankar reasonably does leave the door open for the possibility of omission, of course, with the *onus probandi* on the one who alleges it. If solidly proven, Sukthankar would certainly be the first to grant the fact of redactorial omission, although he himself was rather against accepting its actual existence in the Mahābhārata manuscript tradition, and accordingly—though still *provisionally in principle*—did not apply it in his own text-critical reconstruction *pending further investigation*. (In the matter of addition, however, Edgerton agrees with Sukthankar, only, more emphatically.) And, on the whole we too accept the same general rule, since we do in fact find interpolation predominant in the Mahābhārata manuscripts. Yet we cannot acquiesce in the view that addition *alone* is the universal order in the Mahābhārata redactorial tradition. Of course, cases of deliberate excision occur sporadically and under very special circumstances, yet we hold that there *are* cases where omission can be logically shown to have taken place. And *theoretically* speaking, this is important in no small measure.

We hope to show first from the theoretical plane, that excision *also* represents another aspect of the Mahābhārata textual tradition. We put forward a few plausible arguments in favour of the existence of excision *in principle*:—

1. The first point is based on the fact that within the individual versions there are deviations and differences regarding the documentation of passages. When a particular passage can be incontestably shown to belong to the versional sub-archetype, it happens that a few individualistic manuscripts part company from the rest of their fraternity. This is a patent fact, which seems to establish the fact of excision.

2. Excision is not impossible considering that the redactors are not likely to be *mere* interpolating robots. And it is rational to cut at times, as we shall try to show.

- (a) Sukthankar has stated that the Southern recension is more systematic, orderly and smooth. It could hardly have become so, unless the S-sub-redactor also, at least occasionally, performed wilful surgical operations (major, minor or slight) on the clumsy received text. It seems hard to think that the S-editor should never find the omission of faulty passages the best way to improvement.



Again, S is the *Textus Ornator*, a dilated text. If adding is done out of a desire to improve, this desire to improve *may* lead to cut in certain cases, for the sake of better continuity and sequence. When they often try to add to the beauty by interpolating, they may also try to add to the beauty by eliminating what positively mars the beauty at least in extreme cases. (b) Similarly, in the case of NW which is less inclined to add, its non-adding character may be out of a desire to be soberly concise; and this could lead to deliberate excision, especially in cases where the original text is particularly jumbled. (c) The Archetype, as shown above, is in fact a heterogeneous text. This enormous avalanche-like whole becomes the *Textus Receptus* for the later subredactors. Hence, *a priori*, it is quite likely that one or the other redactor who is out to improve the archetypal text itself would feel tempted to eliminate something on account of the surfeiting bigness or repetitiousness, clumsiness or contradiction in some parts of the received text. Yet it must be granted that the amount of clumsiness that the Mahābhārata redactors put up with in the text which they preserve, is so great that they are not likely to excise except possibly in very extreme cases (which of course, will have to be carefully demonstrated if asserted). (d) The redactors are inclined to modify and embellish, which they sometimes do also by substitution, as can be demonstrated. But substitution also is a kind of suppression. Hence, why can't there be occasions of excision pure and simple, if and when they find this or that passage too unpalatable even for a substitution? Here they could improve by excising.

We allude here to Sukthankar's twofold argument on p. 68 to prove that the Śāradā-Kāśmīrī version is not an intentionally shortened text, but is originally a *Textus Simplicior*. To cite, "That the omissions cannot be the result of a preconceived plan to shorten or to improve the text, follows from two facts:

1. Enough digressions and superfluities still remain in ŚK (NW) which would have all been swept away in pursuance of the alleged plan.
2. ŚK (NW) has its own interpolations, albeit they are few in number and short in extent."

The latter argument can be met by clarifying that we do not say that ŚK does not interpolate. Interpolation is a common factor in the Mahābhārata textual tradition. ŚK could also interpolate for clarification or some other reason. All, we say in addition, is that it also can excise. The former argument of Sukthankar seems to proceed from judging by our modern standards what digressions and superfluities are, which is not the right approach. The redactor may



also keep the original received materials if they suit his plan, or if they are popular and recognised features or not obnoxious. The argument of Sukthankar that ŚK keeps many unnecessary passages does not affect our contention that ŚK can also tend to be excisional under special circumstances—which is far from implying that it is systematically shortening according to a preconceived plan.

Thus, from the point of view of the entire epic tradition, adding and excising are two redactorial factors to be taken into account, with their manifestations considerably varying in degree according to the trends of the recensions and versions as evidenced by the manuscriptal data. Interpolation is not an infallible principle, even if it is a preponderant trend. As to the actual fact of excision, the different arguments adduced here are just preliminary ones. They do not however do away with the obligation on our part to establish the fact by the conclusions drawn from the consideration of concrete textual cases. We do that in the subsequent chapters.

Each of the abovementioned recensions has its own outstanding characteristics with regard to adding or omitting. The tendency to make insertions in avowedly a common denominator pervading all, in varying degrees, which means, all are interpolational *more or less*. For a proper comprehension of the distinctive traits of these branches of tradition, one must have a clear idea of the nature of the post-archetypal stage in the long history of the development of our epic-paradosis. In the mediaeval phase, three recensional ramifications of the Archetype take place as observed above. One of the two Northern recensions represented by ŃVBD (Centre-North or NE) had its origin and growth in the Central-Northern part of India, the upper Gangetic valley, which almost naturally became the hub of the Mahābhārata tradition. We must recall that Kurukṣetra in Middle India was the field of the Mahābhārata War. The Centre-North versions thus flourished in the lands of the origin of the tales (which in those regions were easily accessible to them), and were traditionally living in their atmosphere and cherishing their memories familiarly. And so they are more likely to tend on the one hand to conservatism and also to imaginative embellishment of the traditional materials, but not to excision. While the peripheral streams, as somewhat alien to that homeland of the epic, would be likely to differ in attitude and be more choosy or critical on the one hand (NW) and more free in rounding off and completing the picture according to their own taste, on the other hand (S). This estimate is of a broad and general nature. It does not at any rate intend to convey that NE and NW-S are as described, at all times and in all circumstances. To assert anything sweepingly about any particular recension of the Mahābhārata is hazardous. Thus the Centre-North



strand of tradition is likely to be, as a whole, *more* conservative, faithfully and carefully preserving at times even the accumulated superfluities of the received archetypal *Textus Ornator*. Owing to this circumstance, a better reflection of the Archetype can possibly be seen at times in the Centre-North stream of tradition than in the other two. The Extremities (upper and lower) on the other hand, having a reputation for fastidious scholasticism, are more likely to be redactorially-minded. The conglomerate of the archetypal text could more easily be a sore at times in their critical eyes. Hence, these textual surgeons could have scrupulously cut what they felt to be awkward, and could have tried to produce a smooth and even text, free from particularly undesirable angularities. Nevertheless, from our viewpoint, these clever ancient higher critics, by exercising their blue-pencil-and-scissors eclecticism, would have been a hindrance to our quest for the Archetype by not faithfully transmitting the tradition. Thus they can reveal a greater redactorial trend which may occasionally lead to addition and to excision too. Again, it is also a fact that the NE is often very lavish in adding its own interpolations to the original archetypal matter. This fact however is not incompatible with its conservative tendency. It only shows that its conservatism cannot be just taken on trust or unduly extended to mean aversion to addition. What we contend here is that it does justify our giving NE the benefit of the doubt in the matter of its extra-passages at least under certain circumstances. Owing to its likely conservative character, it should enjoy under those circumstances a relative pre-eminence of (provisional) trustworthiness over the possibly editorially-inclined NW and S. We do however admit that to prove a passage as archetypal against the independent negative testimony of NW+S<sup>19</sup> is not an easy thing, precisely because of the well-known and attested trend in NE to interpolate, and of the still clearer redactorial-interpolational trend in S which (latter) could not easily be said to excise. Therefore, one should endeavour to explore the reasons which could have impelled the omitting ones to cut redactorially, and if a reasonable and satisfactory ground of excision can be discerned, we can legitimately follow the testimony of Centre-North, put down the Extremes as editorial and trace the passage back to the Archetype. This logically

19. The possibility of mutual contacts and influence between NW and S cannot be completely excluded; their independence is not to be considered as something beyond the range of all doubt under special circumstances and in the presence of plausible textual and contextual indicia to the contrary. Their independence is not an absolute axiom, notwithstanding its general acceptability. This qualification may be kept in mind whenever we speak of the independence of those recensions (NW and S), which means that the possibility of their mutual influence has to be reckoned with at times. 'Kashmir and Malabar have for long been chosen homes of Sanskrit learning and Brahmanical culture, and there was intercourse between the learned of the two distant countries.'—Winternitz, *ABORI*, XV, 170.



means that the passage in question was originally genuine, i.e. archetypal, and that when others have expunged it, the Centre-North has staunchly preserved it for us. If no such ground for excision exists, it obviously means that the Centre-North has added. The thorough application of this rule will tend to offer us a *Textus Ornator* (as against the *Textus Brevior*) which in that particular case, our Archetype is proved to have been.<sup>20</sup> This term *Textus Ornator* should obviate all doubts as to our attitude towards Sukthankar's Critical Edition. Sukthankar has principally taken the *Textus Simplicior* (ŚK) as the criterion, whereas our constituted text would not only include Sukthankar's text *in toto*, but would also at times be something *more* than that. This is tantamount to saying that we have nothing against Sukthankar's Critical Edition as such, but what we feel about it is its occasional incompleteness.

A note of warning should be sounded here. The rule of reconstitution, as laid down by us above, is to be utilized very cautiously and sparingly. The condition viz. "provided we can furnish satisfactory reasons for excision", must be taken very seriously. Otherwise, in actual application, it could turn out to be too light and not serve as a check, since it can often be shown (given the loose composition and surfeiting growth of the Mahābhārata) that a passage is incongruous or superfluous or an adventitious digression, and therefore provocative of elimination. So an unguarded reliance upon Centre-North would also tend to produce an inflated and diluted text, larger in extent than the real *Archetypus Ornator*, for, under it would pass off as archetypally genuine the spurious matter of Centre-North. Therefore, it is essential to ward off the purely subjective element. We should be able to advance reasonable grounds that can with some probability disprove an assumption of the Centre-North having interpolated the passage. Again, when we say that the Centre-North is loyal to the Archetype in preserving a passage in question, reciprocally it means that the two Extremes (ŚK & S) have dropped it out of a common or similar editorial reason. The Extremes are normally mutually uninfluenced. Hence, it means that two human brains have worked identically, though possibly independently; the same reason has actuated two critically-inclined individuals to hit upon the same thing. This is not impossible; yet, it certainly makes it necessary that the reason for excision be reasonable, so that it can be normally felt by two dif-

20. A limit case in point, admitted even by Sukthankar, is the double beginning of the Mahābhārata and the double funeral of Pāṇḍu and Mādri (p. 109f). In both cases what can be called the *Textus Ornator* is backed by all the manuscripts, as against a possible *Textus Simplicior* with one single version of both passages, which must have been the primordial text, but which is certainly not that of our Archetype. The latter contained the longer, clumsier, even contradictory *Textus Ornator*, no matter whether literally and psychologically the *Textus Simplicior* may be more acceptable and desirable.



ferent persons in a like manner. It is just a question of psychological reactions which two intelligent human beings are likely to experience in certain circumstances. Therefore the absence of the passage in question is not to be deemed as due to its necessary genetical absence.

All the same, this entire point (the fact of excision in the Mahābhārata manuscript tradition and the conservative vs. critical character of the different versions), we propose to substantiate by facts and text-critical findings in Part II which is concerned with the practical application of the theoretical principles. Thus far it may look like an assertion made rather aprioristically; but, in fact, (on the basis of certain general factors involved) we have indicated it only as a possibility which can very well serve as a working hypothesis. It definitely demands a proper pragmatic substantiation by the actual text-critical cases.

At this juncture, we touch upon a vital point of our thesis as regards the methodology. It is evident that the enormous diversity of the manuscripts reveals every time different textual details. The secret to master these multifarious and (apparently) unconnected textual conditions is to plumb the underlying redactorial mentality, of which the different details are only outward manifestations. Now, although it is necessary to treat and judge every case on its own merit, yet by accumulating cases where similar behavioural characteristics are found, we can broadly generalize in the abovementioned manner: Centre-North is under certain conditions comparatively more conservative, and the Extremes are in those cases rather editorial. This entails the necessity of coupling a psychological-logical approach with a strict attention to the concrete manuscriptal data. The manuscripts are not static stereotyped specimens of text-critical abstractions or lifeless fossils. They demand a probe beneath their written surface to their authors' minds, which are responsible for their behaviour-patterns. We have reason to maintain that what one man has done (howsoever cunning, erroneous, eccentric) can be usually discovered by another man, given an X-ray-like insight into the former's actions and reactions like that of an investigating detective. This fascinating activity of unmasking the mysteries of the manuscripts can alone redeem this science from becoming a dry-as-dust exercise of additions and subtractions of paper-units. "We must weigh the points of resemblance rather than count them." (Bosanquet) What a joy Text-Criticism can yield, provided that we are able to animate these ever-eager-to-rise-up persons (in the garb of manuscripts) endowed with peculiar idiosyncracies. They will then start intimately whispering into our ears their age-old secrets. Hence Text-Criticism ought not to rest content with the considera-



tion of *what* the manuscripts say, but instead should investigate *why* they say so, i.e. what they *mean*. The *complete* text-critic must possess a 'sixth-sense' as it were, in the form of a dynamic psychological penetration, over and above a punctilious finesse and a conscientious logic.

The application of a psychological factor in textual criticism surely appears to tread on the province of higher criticism. Yet its use cannot be denied as far as it is demanded by the logic of the manuscriptal facts in order to find their genetical explanation in the parental archetypal text. Only after such a text has been fully constituted as the only necessary and sufficient cause of the manuscriptal effects, does the real Higher Criticism begin. It is now no more concerned with the parent text of the manuscripts themselves, but with its sources and component elements and layers of which it is the product.

To Dr. Sukthankar's honour must be said that he has, with his unfailing awareness and perception, realised fully well the common pitfalls of the Mahābhārata Text-Criticism and has unequivocally cautioned against the danger of a 'mechanical' operation with the manuscripts. He says, "The problem is clearly not solved by formulating *a priori* hypothesis as to the interrelationship of the different versions and fix the text in terms of some preconceived formula; for instance by assuming as absolutely independent a certain number of these divergent versions, and laying down an arithmetical rule that whatever is common to two or more of such and such versions must be original. In this method, we can easily deceive ourselves and others; for the results arrived at will appear sounder than in reality they are. Even though the formal operations may be a piece of flawless logic, nevertheless the results, being based on premises possibly unsound though apparently clear and definite, may be wholly fictitious." (p. 103) Thus, Sukthankar comes out strongly for the view that the Mahābhārata problem is not a problem in textual statics but in textual dynamics. He has explicitly stressed in his strong reply to Ruben's criticism the acute necessity of a psychological insight: "Many of the difficulties of which he speaks in his paper are due to his failure to understand the *modus operandi* of the redactors and copyists of the epic and his lack of insight into the character of the different manuscripts—an insight which can be acquired only after a long familiarity with the manuscripts themselves, and a close and patient study, of their tendencies and idiosyncracies." (p. 245) Evidently, Sukthankar, we are fully aware, possessed in ample measure the psychological acumen necessary for tackling certain text-critical quandaries of the Mahābhārata, and utilized it with remarkable balance and success on the whole. Yet



owing to the vast magnitude of the materials he was handling and the complicated interplay of all the circumstances involved, he could not afford to delve so very intensively into every particular text-critical nicety. Hence, with his scholarly sportsmanship and candour, he has himself urged the need to make a renewed attempt on the basis of his Critical Edition for a final answer to certain difficult text-critical problems.<sup>21</sup> Accordingly we have done that and have arrived at certain results different from his. Notwithstanding our partial disagreement with him, it is fully recognized by us that Dr. Sukthankar has reached an all-time high watermark of India's text-critical scholarship. His Critical Apparatus is a text-critical *monumentum aere perennius* (through which he *defunctus adhuc loquitur*) truly cyclopean of his assiduous *akribie* and meticulous accuracy. The importance of the 'first' text-critical principles formulated by him to meet the Mahābhārata problem (with all that it connotes and wherein every difficulty of the general Science of Text-Criticism is accentuated to the highest pitch), is also invaluable. His Critical Studies are a glowing symbol of his rare intelligence, industry and insight. They reveal his unrelaxing alertness and scholarly dignity. It is indeed a joy to agree so substantially with and yet at times—led by his very spirit—to feel bound to differ from such a scholar.

We should like to conclude the chapter with Dr. Belvalkar's mention in the consepctus of the projected Epilogue, of the need for a psychological study of the manuscripts. Belvalkar says, "After all the parvans of the Epic have been completely and critically edited, it would be possible by a thorough-going version-wise study of the variant readings and of the omissions and transpositions recorded for the epic as a whole, to reach certain generalizations as to the nature and characteristics of the several versions, and eventually of the two main recensions postulated (thereby carrying to its natural culmination the investigation which, with the very inadequate manuscript material then available to him, Lüders made in 1901 for the 'Grantha Recensio' of the Mahābhārata). The most important part of this study would of course be the *psychology* behind the several additions, omissions and substitutions (and the cultural background to which they would testify)."<sup>22</sup> It would indeed be a worthwhile programme to go in for such a psychological study of the versions. More importantly, however, further specific studies

21. We were fortunate to have Sukthankar's private interleaved edition. The text-critical problems discussed in the forthcoming chapters were a source of his own concern and discomfort, as borne out by this valuable personal document.

22. *Prospectus*, p. 11.



of the cases, based on an intensive examination of the critical apparatus should be made to see if precisely this very psychological factor can yield a concrete gain to the Critical Text itself by bringing it a step nearer to the archetypal original.



### CHAPTER III

## THE ĀSTĪKAPARVAN

In part II we deal with a few specific text-critical problems in the *Suparṇākhyāna*, which is selected as a representative specimen of the text-critical problem in general. The *Suparṇākhyāna* constitutes a part of the *Āstikaparvan*. It will be appropriate to recount the story of the *Āstikaparvan* for the facility of discussion in the following chapters, in which there are frequent allusions to the contents of the *Āstikaparvan*.

Parikṣit was the son of Abhimanyu and the grandson of Arjuna, one of the five heroes of the *Mahābhārata*. He was a great king true to the traditions of his dynasty. Once upon a time Parikṣit was on a hunt. He hunted many wild animals and also a deer, whom he wounded and pursued as it escaped into the dense forest. The king in his search for the deer was separated from his retinue and was drawn far away into the forest. Fatigued and thirsty, he came across sage Śamīka lost in meditation. The king, approaching him hastily inquired the whereabouts of the deer. Naturally the sage would not answer. The king became incensed at this (supposed) effrontery of the sage and with the tip of his bow placed a dead serpent lying nearby on the sage's shoulders. The ṛṣi remained motionless and the king went away. In the meanwhile, Śamīka's young son Śṛṅgī, recently returned home with the permission of Brahmā after waiting upon Him, arrived on the spot. The irascible boy, provoked by his companions who jeered at his father, pronounced a dreadful curse upon the miscreant king to the effect that the highly venomous serpent Takṣaka impelled by his power would bring about Parikṣit's death within seven days. Full of wrath he informed his father of his chastisement of Parikṣit for his misdeed. The compassionate sage Śamīka upbraided his son for his rashness in cursing the king whose protection they were enjoying. He also commanded him to atone for his short-temperedness and to be full of forbearance. But since the curse of the ascetic-boy could not be withdrawn, the sage made great effort to forestall its effects. He sent forthwith his pupil Gauramukha to warn the king about the impending disaster. Parikṣit was extremely aggrieved, not so much on account of the prospect of his



death as for his own unworthy act. He sent back Gauramukha with entreaties to the *ṛṣi* to forgive him. However, the king in consultation with his ministers erected for himself a perfectly secure palace full of physicians and medicines and brāhmaṇs expert in magic formulas. Thus safeguarded the king went about his daily duties. On the last fatal day, Kāśyapa, a great doctor specializing in poisons, started for the king's court to offer him his services with a view to obtaining great wealth from him. Takṣaka saw him and went to him in the guise of an old brāhmaṇ. First he tried to intimidate him by blustering, but Kāśyapa, who was more than a match for him, firmly challenged him. In an actual contest-test, Takṣaka exercised his scorching power on a huge tree by reducing it to ashes, and Kāśyapa in turn overpowered him by reviving the tree. Takṣaka now convinced of Kāśyapa's strength bribed him away from his mission. Besides, Kāśyapa also realised that Parikṣit's life-span was over, and so desisted from interfering with the course of Destiny. He went back with his desire fully satiated by Takṣaka's gift of wealth. Takṣaka was now free from fear. He hurriedly repaired towards the capital of Parikṣit, and on the way contrived with his followers a deceitful plan to enter into the impenetrable citadel of the king. He sent the snakes to the king in the garb of hermits with fruits and other offerings. The king gladly accepted the offerings. He asked his courtiers to taste the sweet fruits brought by the hermits. The fruit in the king's hand had but a worm inside. Taking the worm in his hand Parikṣit haughtily spoke: 'The sun is setting and I am out of danger. Yet let the words of the sage (Śṛṅgī) also be not false, and so let this little worm bite me as if Takṣaka had bitten me.' And the hapless king put the insect on his neck. At once the worm manifested itself as Takṣaka and, grown huge, entwined the king's neck, and bit him to death.

After the death of Parikṣit, the royal priest enthroned his son, Janamejaya, who was only an infant then. In due course Janamejaya began to reign like his illustrious ancestors. He was lost in enjoyments with his beloved Queen Vapuṣṭamā. (adhys. 36.8-40)

Nevertheless Destiny evolves in an imperceptible manner. Takṣaka in his arrogance had antagonized a sage called Uttanka. (adhy. 3) Consequently Uttanka was extremely eager to wreak vengeance upon him. He went to Janamejaya and instigated him by informing him about Takṣaka's being the cause of his father's death. Janamejaya asked his ministers whether it was all true. (adhys. 3 and 45) The ministers confirmed Uttanka's account. Janamejaya, now infuriated against Takṣaka, at once resolved to avenge his father's



death by exterminating the serpent along with his whole race. Thereby he thought he would also satisfy the sage Uttanka. His priests advised him to institute a serpent-destroying sacrifice. Accordingly, the *sarpasatra* was organized with all its ritual exactitude. (adhys. 45-46-47 1/2)

At this point what is essential (to the current story of Janamejaya's snake-sacrifice) in the *Suparṇākhyāna* should be mentioned. Kadrū and Vinatā, the two sisters and the co-wives of the sage Kāśyapa (different from the above one), were rivals. They entered into a bet with regard to the colour of the heavenly horse, Uccaiśravas. Vinatā maintained that the horse was all white, whereas Kadrū asserted that he had a black tail. The loser was to become the slave of the winner. Kadrū was bent on defrauding Vinatā. She knew full well that the horse was all white, and so she ordered her black nāga-sons to go and cling to the horse's bushy white tail as black hair. The serpents did not at first submit to their mother's unfair command. This act of disobedience was immediately followed by the mother's ruthless curse that they would all be consumed in the fire of Janamejaya's sacrifice. The snakes did, however, subsequently obey the order of their mother and enabled her to succeed in her crooked plan.

The serpents were naturally panicky owing to the terrible curse and held a conference with their chief, Vāsuki as the President to devise a plan to avert the general calamity threatening them. Vāsuki began, 'We are assembled here in order to think how the well-being of the serpents can be produced, which is under a grave menace. For that purpose, Janamejaya's sacrifice should be somehow thwarted.' The astute nāga-councillors came forward one by one with a variety of interesting ideas. They suggested that they should turn themselves into pious brāhmaṇs and implore Janamejaya not to start the sacrifice, or become Janamejaya's counsellors and condemn the idea of sacrifice by pointing out the sins attending such sacrifices and the horrible consequences thereof in both worlds, or bite to death the priests employed. Some snakes however objected to the idea of committing *brahma-hatyā* and preferred resignation and peace. Other fanciful remedies were also recommended — to become clouds and extinguish the sacrificial fire with showers, or to steal away the sacrificial vessels, or to bite all who attend the function, or to pollute the sacrificial food, or to be the priests and create hindrances, or to bind or bite Janamejaya himself. They all looked up to Vāsuki for approval. He naturally could not support any such proposal and was in distress. Elāpatra so far listening quietly to all this, spoke, "Destiny is all-powerful and so let us be resigned. When the curse was delivered by our mother, I



took refuge in her lap out of fright, and overheard the gods addressing Brahmā, 'Kadrū is indeed stern and heartless to curse her own sons in this manner. Why was she not prevented from her sinister act?' Prajāpati was displeased with the harassment that the evil snakes caused to the world, and so He answered, 'Only the wicked shall be annihilated in the *sarpasatra*, but not the righteous ones. And the means of their release is Āstika, the offspring of the Jaratkārus, a great sage and Vāsuki's own sister, both of the same name. He shall halt the sacrifice in time to save all the righteous serpents'."

Elāpatra's words relieved the dejected serpents and were greeted with great exhilaration. From that day, Vāsuki began to look after his sister Jaratkāru with immense care and affection. The gods also, who were profoundly obliged to Vāsuki for his help at the time of *samudra-manthana* (churning of the ocean, adhys. 15-17) earnestly pleaded with Brahmā on behalf of Vāsuki and his race. Prajāpati reiterated what He had proclaimed in the past. Vāsuki since then looked most anxiously for the sage Jaratkāru to whom his sister Jaratkāru was to be wedded. He sent his servants in all directions to watch vigilantly for him. (adhys. 33-35)

*The Story of Āstika:* (adhys. 13 and 41-44)

Jaratkāru of the Yāyāvara family was constantly steeped in rigorous austerities. While wandering about the earth he once happened to see his ancestors, all emaciated and suspended with their heads downwards on the remnant of one single fibre of *vīraṇa* grass, which was being gnawed at by a mouse. Jaratkāru deeply moved inquired about the cause of their distress. The hanging sages said, 'We are falling into the abyss, because we are threatened with the extinction of our race for want of its perpetuator. The last remnant is the indiscreet Jaratkāru who has preferred to remain a life-long celibate and is avidly hoarding penances. It is on account of such a son that we are as good as sonless. This *vīraṇa* is the symbol of our family. Its roots are already eaten away by the mouse (in the form) of Time. This one blade of grass on which we depend is Jaratkāru, the sole survivor of our race. And he too, cut off by Time, shall forsooth meet the same fate as his forefathers by falling into *naraka*. No amount of penance or sacrifice or any other holy act or all combined can equal the merit of progeny. Please tell all this to him if you happen to meet him. But who are you who sympathise with us so much?' Jaratkāru then revealed his identity and confessed that he had realized that he was a great sinner who had deviated from the right path. He further said, 'I shall now turn away my mind from *brahmacarya* and assure you that I shall marry, but I shall marry a girl who bears my own name, who is given in alms to me, and whom I shall not have



to maintain. Otherwise I cannot marry.' Saying so, he began to wander in search of a maiden of his description, but it was all in vain. In utter disappointment he started lamenting in the forest about his sad condition and cried for a suitable wife so that he might procure the liberation of his ancestors.

The serpents who were looking for such a sage ran to Vāsuki and informed him of Jaratkāru's arrival. Vāsuki highly elated rushed to Jaratkāru and quickly complied with all his conditions. After the marriage the sage remained in Vāsuki's palace. He however made two stipulations with his wife: 'If you either disregard me or do something unpleasant to me, I shall forsake this house and you too.' She agreed and sedulously attended upon her husband. In course of time she conceived. Once the sage was fast asleep with his head resting in her lap, when the sun started to set. The poor lady was in a real fix. If she awakened her husband for his *sandhyā* (evening devotions), he might be annoyed. She however gathered courage and gently awakened him. Jaratkāru was exasperated beyond limit and said, 'You have indeed humiliated me. The Sun dare not go to rest when I am resting. And yet my sleep has been disturbed by you. For this disrespect I shall abandon you.' Jaratkāru was completely dismayed and humbly explained that she had never intended to commit any offence against the great sage. When Jaratkāru was adamant she made pathetic entreaties saying, 'You should not desert an innocent woman. (*dharme sthitāṃ sthito dharme sadā priyahite ratām*) My brother Vāsuki would think that I have ruined the entire purpose of my marriage, that of begetting a saviour of my clan cursed by mother Kadrū. Our child is still unborn. Why do you wish to go away before it is born?' The *ṛṣi* was then appeased. With his prophetic knowledge he blessed his noble wife and foretold the greatness of the son to be born. Then he departed. At the proper time Jaratkāru delivered a son 'as resplendent as Fire and Sun'. He was named Āstika because his father had left saying '*asti*'. The boy mastered the entire Vedic lore from no other than Cyavana Bhārgava. He was extraordinarily brilliant. He was the highest source of joy to the depressed serpents and was nurtured with great care. (adhys. 41-44)

In due course (adhy. 47) Janamejaya's serpent-sacrifice also commenced; the magic incantations for drawing Takṣaka into the blazing fire were chanted. Takṣaka took refuge with Indra, who willingly protected him. Takṣaka was thus safe whereas millions of other serpents of all kinds, of all colours, of all dimensions came wriggling from all nooks and corners and plunged into the fire. (adhy. 47, 18-25 and adhy. 52, enumerate the nāgas that entered the sacrificial fire.) Most eminent and efficient priests had assem-



bled there to make the sacrifice successful. (adhy. 48) When the nāgās were thus being speedily consumed by Janamejaya's serpent-sacrifice, Vāsuki in great fear approached his sister, Jaratkāru. She called her son Āstika, and explained to him the background of his birth and the present calamity. Āstika promised his uncle, Vāsuki, that he would save him and his race. Without any delay he proceeded to Janamejaya's House of Sacrifice. (adhy. 49) Āstika, forbidden by the gatekeepers, stood there and lauded the sacrifice. (adhy. 50). All were pleased with the praise. Janamejaya expressed his desire to grant a wish to that child of great lustre. The officiating priests agreed but were not pleased with the king's haste, since Takṣaka was yet to come. Janamejaya asked them to speed up the ritual with all their might and bring about Takṣaka's fall. The sacrificial minister was also indignant because Takṣaka was sheltered by Indra. Consequently Indra himself had to appear with the horrified Takṣaka who stuck fast to his garment. Janamejaya too was now impatient and demanded that even Indra should be driven into the fire if need be. In the meanwhile, the serpent, despite Indra's protection, was seen to come reeling and hissing with an accelerated motion towards the fire. The priests finding their object being almost fulfilled complacently told Janamejaya to satisfy the wish of Āstika. Accordingly Janamejaya offered to Āstika anything he asked for. Āstika asked the king exactly when Takṣaka was on the verge of falling into the fire for the cessation of the sacrifice. Janamejaya did not like the idea and so insistently requested the sage to ask for any other wish which he would readily grant. But Āstika was firm. He bade the falling Takṣaka to halt and Takṣaka remained dangling in the air like the mythical Triśanku. Janamejaya had now to keep his word. He commanded the sacrifice to be stopped, granting the serpents their welfare. And up rose the mighty sound of applause at the glorious exploit of this of this benign benefactor. (adhy. 34) (However, it is rather strange that Takṣaka who is all along the root of the whole trouble should be saved in the end, especially when so many others were incinerated.)

Janamejaya gratified the priests with profuse gifts. He also venerated Āstika and extended to him an invitation to act as his Purohita in the forthcoming great *Aśvamedha*. Āstika, full of joy, ran to his mother and Vāsuki. The nāgās also rejoiced at the restoration of their lives, and pressed Āstika to choose a boon. Āstika wished that those who recited this Ākhyāna of his should be free from the danger of snakes and reptiles. The serpents agreed.—This is the kathā of Āstika, the great liberator of the serpents (as well as of his ancestors).



## CHAPTER IV

### ADHYĀYA 18, 7CD

The first text-critical problem is the one in adhy. 18. This adhyāya is of great importance in the Ākhyāna because it contains the central episode of the curse cast upon the snakes by their mother, Kadrū. It is a passage beset with peculiar redactorial problems, and so it becomes a splendid text-critical shibboleth.

A brief résumé of the Suparṇākhyāna story is: Kadrū and Vinatā wager their freedom in a bet on the colour of Uchhaiśravas's tail. Kadrū fraudulently bids her snake-children to make it look black. They refuse and are cursed to perish in Janamejaya's snake-sacrifice. Yet, Kadrū's command is somehow fulfilled, and Vinatā becomes her slave. Vinatā is finally freed by her son, Suparṇa-Garuḍa who brings the Soma from heaven as her ransom. He meets Viṣṇu and Indra on the journey. The snakes are tricked by Garuḍa.

The Suparṇākhyāna is one of the several Ākhyānas that have made their way into the Mahābhārata. These Ākhyānas were independently floating stories in the pre-Mahābhārata period, and an old pre-Mahābhārata Suparṇākhyāna also (if ever there was one) may be regarded as one such story (in prose or in verse). That original Suparṇākhyāna\* would, in all probability, have been a remodelled version of the semi-Vedic Suparṇa-Adhyāya, and would thus be the precursor of our Suparṇākhyāna found in the Mahābhārata. In the epic, the story has been linked up by the archetypal redactor with the main plot of Janamejaya's snake-sacrifice in the Āstikaparvan. The redactor was impelled by a legitimate desire to furnish a suitable background and occasion for the recital of the principal kathā of the Bhāratas. This is the famous frame-work of Janamejaya's *śarpasatra*, a miniature epic, which contains a whole cycle of the snake-stories prevailing in those times; and of those snake-tales the Suparṇākhyāna is an outstanding example. In order to accommodate it organically into his pre-conceived plan, the redactorial ingenuity has invented a new linking factor not found in the older versions of the tale — namely, Kadrū's curse inflicted upon her thousand snake-children, condemning them all to be consumed in Janamejaya's serpenticidal sacrifice. This curse-element really smacks of the redactor's craft, precisely because it is an afterthought. The myth, of

\* A detailed comparative study of the various versions of this Ākhyāna has been made by the author in 'The Evaluation of the Suparṇa Saga in the Mahābhārata' published in the JOI, XXI, Nos. 1-2 (Sept.-Dec. 1971), 42-65.



itself, in its ancient Vedic origin does not need or contain Kadrū's trickery for its etiological purpose. That trickery with its consequent command, disobedience and curse is needed only by the Mahābhārata redactor, so that he can connect or rather dovetail the tale to his dominant theme of the Janamejaya sacrifice. Therefore, it is not unnatural to think that the whole idea of the trickery with its corollary, as seen in the epic, originates from the Mahābhārata redactor's own brain. Nevertheless, it is quite possible that the trick and the prompt co-operation in it by the snakes were there already in the pre-Mahābhārata stage of the old Suparṇākhyāna tale. In that case the Mahābhārata redactor would have only added the curse and its consequences, since the primary purpose of the pre-epic poet in his Suparṇākhyāna was just to present a legend providing a further (because the Suparṇa-Adhyāya also does it, yet without any trick) mythological justification for Garuḍa's natural enmity and voracity with regard to the snakes, whereas the Mahābhārata redactor has rendered this original idea of the previous narrator subservient to his own motive of leading the tale to Janamejaya's snake-sacrifice while at the same time keeping the motive of enmity. Hence he is constrained to retouch radically the affirmative import of his source-story into the negative, i.e. the immediate universal obedience into initial universal disobedience, which helps him to introduce the curse. This is again facilitated by the new setting of the postponement of the flight to the following day without any visible reason, except to create an opportunity for the introduction of the new feature of the serpents' disobedience and Kadrū's fulfilment of the curse. Thus the curse is redactorial from the point of view of the original Suparṇa-story. It was introduced by the redactor-compiler of the Mahābhārata archetypal text when including the epic of Janamejaya-sacrifice along with the Suparṇa-Ākhyāna. The redactor thus creates the semblance of a causal relation between the curse and the burning of the snakes at Janamejaya's serpent-sacrifice, as if the snakes were consumed in the sacrificial fire owing to their mother's blazing curse meted out as a punishment for their disobedient behaviour. Yet the destruction of the snakes at the Janamejaya sacrifice is already adequately motivated. Sukthankar rightly says in his Private Edition (p. 169), 'The original story had no curse, which was introduced to motivate the destruction of the serpents, but which does not fit properly.' The destruction of the serpents could take place, curse or no curse, and even without the very Kadrū-Vinatā legend for that matter. Thus the curse appears redundant from the point of view of the inner logic of the Āstika-parvan narrative. This need not disconcert us, for it would only be an illustration of the superabundant and even redundant redactorial style forced by the accumulation of originally independent



tales around a different central theme.

There is, however, an important point in this connection. There are actually two parts of the sub-epic of Janamejaya's snake-sacrifice: one that leads to the *sarpasatra*, and the other that leads to Āstika, the saviour of the serpents from the sacrifice. The stories of Parikṣit, Uttanka and even Ruru) are connected with Janamejaya's sacrifice, whereas the stories of Kadrū-Vinatā and the Jaratkārus are connected with the chapter of Āstika. Now there is no doubt that the destruction of the serpents in Janamejaya's sacrifice is sufficiently motivated even without the curse element. Yet the curse becomes a proof of the redactorial ingenuity\* in being invented as the basis of the story of the Āstikaparvan, though the rest of the story of the Ākhyāna has nothing to do with the latter, as it is always the case in such a telescopic insertion of stories within stories. It is in fact indispensable in view of what happens subsequently in the Āstikaparvan. The question with the redactor is not so much to supply an additional reason for the destruction of the serpents in Janamejaya's sacrifice as to lay down the basis for the emergence of Āstika and the depiction of his kathā. Āstika is capitally important for the stoppage of the sacrifice, which again is vitally essential for the sake of a natural fact. The natural fact is that the serpents do in reality exist in the world, which means that they have survived the serpent-destroying sacrifice. This much-decried curse-element in the Suparṇākhyāna is very important in that it sets the wheel of the serpents' efforts in motion for bringing forth their deliverer; it activates the whole episode of the Jaratkārus and Āstika. Thus the curse constitutes the backbone of the chapter of Āstika as it makes possible the inevitable aspect of Janamejaya's sacrifice, namely its cessation by Āstika.

There is still another point that partly commends the redactorial cleverness. The curse is meant to satisfy the demands of 'poetic justice', since it sounds quite unpalatable that Janamejaya's sacrifice should destroy all (or at least so many) serpents for the fault of Takṣaka alone. Hence the redactor involves other serpents also by their disobedience to their mother's command. But this lands him into another incongruous circumstance that their destruction due to the curse is for a righteous disobedience (in refusing to cheat!). The redactor could probably be aware of this discrepancy, and so he again and again points out that only the evil ones would be destroyed. For that purpose, Prajāpati is introduced as tempering the curse with mercy and justice. Thus the redactor makes the ser-

\* For a further illustration of such redactorial ingenuity see the author's "The Problem of the Double Introduction to the Mahābhārata", *JAOS*, 93, No. 4 (1973), 547-550.



pents incur the curse by their disobedience, but lets the curse be effective only on the wicked ones.

In this connexion, Winternitz\* alluding to Oldenberg's view says, 'Professor Oldenberg in his most interesting essay on the *Suparṇākhyāna*, suggests that originally this legend had nothing to do with the snake-sacrifice. This, he thinks, is proved by the awkwardness with which the story of the *Mahābhārata* tries to overcome the difficulty that, though Kadrū wins the wager with the help of the snakes, yet the snakes perish in consequence of their disobedience, as cursed by Kadrū.' The point is this: Kadrū wins the bet. It means that the serpents played the trick, which in its turn means that they did obey their mother's command, may be subsequently. Therefore, one would expect that Kadrū should have relented and revoked (or at least softened) the curse by which all the serpents were to be burnt in Janamejaya's snake-sacrifice. This, however, does not actually happen as the folkloric logic would seem to demand. Many snakes are consumed in the sacrificial fire in lurid execution of the curse, and yet the sparing of the others is not at all due to their subsequent obedience and softening of the curse by their mother.

Although it is true that the original legend had nothing to do with the snake-sacrifice, the reason given by Oldenberg is off the mark. Dismissing Oldenberg's view Sukthankar says in his *Private Edition* (p. 169), 'This paradox is a wrong view. They both refuse and do the deed. The punishment for their first refusal is unaffected by their subsequent compliance. In any case there is no question of the revocation of the curse of Kadrū.' What is meant is that the narrator is interested only in the curse. This he has recorded, and so we need not expect a revocation, especially since he has brought about the sparing of the serpents through another factor. Even if a revocation of the curse took place, the serpents would still have been destroyed in the Janamejaya-sacrifice. As a matter of fact, the whole story is so built that the non-revocation of Kadrū's curse becomes fundamental to the central event of the emergence of Āstika. The snakes were doomed to perish, as expressed through *Elāpatra* in *adhy.* 34 and there was nothing that Kadrū's relenting could have done about it. Hence the point of Kadrū's revocation of the curse does not enter into the original author's plan in any way; it is in fact contrary to that plan. Again, we may ask Oldenberg, 'If no revocation of the curse takes place, why should only many perish?' All should, as a matter of logic. The partial destruction itself shows that though the curse meant that all would die, its consequences were partly left to be influenced by the external element of Āstika, whom

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\* *IA*, XXVII (1898), 127.



the author presents as prophesied and pre-destined to be the saviour of the serpents. Thus in point of fact there was a mitigation of the curse. Of course, it does not come from Kadrū, but from Prajāpati originally (in *adhys.* 32-35) and from the following efforts made by the snakes to secure the birth of Āstika and his intercession. The point is that Kadrū's curse need not be squared with the result of Janamejaya's snake-destroying sacrifice; they should rather be kept apart and treated independently because no relenting and revocation by Kadrū are contemplated by the archetypal redactor. The importance of the curse lies in another direction. Instead of trying to fit in the universal curse with a partial consequence, which gives rise to all sorts of contradictions, it should be viewed as giving an initial push to the serpents' efforts to bring forth their deliverer, which is also an equally important aspect of the story. The only opening, if any, for a mitigation of the curse (without contradiction!) can be seen in that very source of Kadrū's curse. It is the peculiar phrase used by Kadrū in her curse '*sarpasatre vartamāne pāvako vaḥ pradhakṣyati*', which might be thought to allow the possibility of deliverance for the snakes by the stoppage of the sacrifice itself. And this holds good whether the author intended it by those words or not. Thus the difficulty pointed out by Oldenberg is not the real difficulty.

With these preliminary observations, we take up the question whether this curse is universal or partial. The problem arises from the fact that the two recensions N & S are at variance. They give two divergent readings: the Southern variant having a universal import:

7(c) *tadvākyaṃ nānvapadyanta* (d) *tān śāsāpa bhujaṅgamān* and the Northern having a partial import:

7(c) *nānvapadyanta ye vākyaṃ* (d) *tān śāsāpa bhujaṅgamān*

Their conflicting value is well indicated by the wavy line used in the Critical Edition. Notwithstanding the use of a wavy line, Sukthankar is clearly in favour of the South reading, which meant unambiguously that the curse was all-embracing in consequence of the general disobedience of the serpent-sons of Kadrū.

Before examining text-critically the worth of one variant vs. the other, it is worthwhile to ascertain the question of the extent of the curse on contextual grounds. The curse is beyond any doubt meant by the author of the tale to be universal, because psychologically, the composer of the story would not contradict himself at this place in the whole parvan by making a non-universal state-



ment. He has again and again stated on occasions\* that the curse is general, inclusive, universal. Nor could the archetypal redactor have understood it in a partitive sense and have implied that the vast majority of the serpents disobeyed and were cursed, with a practical-moral universality and not with a strictly numerical one. This could be sought to be supported by the instance of S (when it exempts Karkoṭaka), and of both S and N who have clearly accepted the exemption of Śeṣa (*adhy.* 32) which is undoubtedly made by the archetypal author himself. But, these two instances do not really mean anything, because both entail explicit single exemptions for very specific reasons. On the other hand, the language used by the archetypal redactor in all the texts referring to the curse is absolutely clear with regard to its universality. This is fully confirmed by the immediately following Prajāpati-episode to begin with (in *adhy.* 18) and the dialogue between Prajāpati and Śeṣa, and the serpents' council, and the story of Vāsuki and Jaratkāru leading to Āstika and to the very core of the Janamejaya-sacrifice. Thus, the whole context as well as in this very context the whole South, and some of the Northern manuscripts (those with App. 1.13)—all agree that the curse is universal. Sukthankar has also opted for the universal Southern variant. The partiality of subsequent fulfilment is immaterial to the present question, because it is attributable to the intercession of Āstika, which, as said above, is necessary precisely against universal destruction. Thus the universality of the curse responds to a strong body of the textual and contextual data, in other words, the whole atmosphere of the story.

Hence the archetypal author of the story must have employed a text having a universal meaning. Not only that, but the N and S recensional sub-redactors also could not have meant anything else. It seems impossible that any one could put the partitive or exclusive sense against the entire context and trend of the tale.

With this as firm ground to stand upon, we come to the really crucial 7cd (above), about which two opposite readings have been recorded. The Critical Edition has regarded the South reading as one containing the right meaning (universal) and has accordingly upheld it. Sukthankar accepted it, because according to him, it is a '*lectio difficilior*', since, both the Serpent-Council (App. 1.13) and Karkotaka-episode (286\*) having been dropped by him, the actual fulfilment of Kadrū's command (in *adhy.* 20) remains unexplained. Yet in fact it is not so, because in the S-recension the passage 286\*

\* *mātrā hi bhujaṅgāḥ śaptāḥ pūrvam brahmadevān vara janamejayasya vo yaṁne dhakṣyaty anilasārathih*—1, 13, 35  
*nūnam sarvavināśo(ā)yam asmākaṁ samudāhṛtaḥ*—1, 33, 6  
*bhujaṅgānām aśeṣānām mātā kadrūr iti śrutiḥ*  
*tayā śaptā ruṣitayā sūtā yasmān nibodha tat*—1, 49, 5



is inseparably attached to the Southern variant. Hence to sunder the two is unjust to S and text-critically unsound because of that logical link between them. The Northern reading, on the other hand, seems to fly in the face of the surrounding text and the general trend and spirit of the tale. It looks like a solitary discordant element in the whole tale and so seems inadmissible from the point of view of the universality of the curse implied in the total context. However, as said above, it is certain that whichever reading (N or S) is accepted, it has to convey a universal meaning. Now it only remains to decide which of the two readings is more likely to be archetypally genuine.

It seems that the N-reading deserves at least the benefit of the doubt. The right to preference in respect of representing the genetic reading belongs more plausibly to the Northern variant than to the Southern one, precisely because of the former's 'difficult' character. As far as the fulfilment of Kadrū's command is concerned, it is a '*lectio facilior*', since it seems to say that only some snakes disobeyed, but from the wider contextual point of view, it is a clear '*lectio difficilior*', since it goes against the very central point of the universality of the curse. Let us examine both the variants carefully and find out which of the two can be regarded as a derivative of the other. The Southern reading, '*tad vākyaṃ nānvapadyanta, tān śaśāpa bhujaṅgamān*', is so clearly universal in meaning. For that very reason, it is rather a '*lectio facilior*'. If it is original, N has obviously no reason to change it into his own, because the S-reading is so fittingly in agreement with what is contextually demanded, the universality of disobedience and curse. Therefore the genetic derivation from S to N is implausible (especially when the N-recension sub-archetype has App. 1.13, as we shall see in Chapter V). Besides, the Southern variant, on the very face of it is uncouth, stylistically and syntactically speaking. The asyndetic and hacked style of the line looks very much like broken Sanskrit. There are no express grammatical subjects of '*nānvapadyanta*' and '*śaśāpa*'; the subjects cannot be construed by grammatical connexion with the immediately preceding sentence. This also shows that it cannot be the original-archetypal reading. On the other hand, if the N-reading, '*nānvapadyanta ye vākyaṃ tān śaśāpa bhujaṅgamān*', were original, S would object to its inconsistency and would redactorially correct it away, so as to make it clearly universal in sense, which it does even at the expense of style. Thus, in fact, one cannot start in 7c from S and lead to N as a redactorial modification, while it is logically plausible to pass from N to S, because of the former's opposition to the universality of disobedience and curse in the whole tale. Add to this the fact that S has Karkoṭaka



(286\*) as the sole exception from the general disobedience; hence S was bound to change an N-like archetypal text. Therefore the N-variant being the '*lectio difficilior*' is original and archetypal, and S is derivative and secondary. The above concerns the reading of 7c. As regards 7d, N and S agree. 7d plus the reading of the N gives '*nānvapadyanta ye vākyam, tān śasāpa bhujaṅgamān*'. This reading is to be understood as involving a universal import according to the archetypal redactor. This is the pivotal point. Its misunderstandability explains the attempts at correction by the later sub-redactors. This ambiguous archetypal text could have easily provoked S to alter it to have a clearly universal meaning. The N-recensional sub-archetype (or sub-archetypes, NW and NE) faithfully takes over the archetypal text for two reasons: the contextual one, and that of its having the universal Snakes' Council, both of which clarify the ambiguity felt in 7 cd. But the versions are divided among themselves. Those that include App. 1.13 understand the archetypal text as meaning universal disobedience and curse, since all serpents subsequently decide to obey (in App. 1.13); those that drop App. 1.13 surely understand the text as expressing non-universality to mean that some do obey; and so for those redactors App. 1.13 is unnecessary. But in so doing they run counter to the universal trend of the story. In this way then the Northern text '*nānvapadyanta ye vākyam, tān śasāpa bhujaṅgamān*' explains the psychological attitudes of all the redactors. Through such a pragmatic procedure, we ascribe the Northern reading to the archetype.

The question remains as to how this reading with '*ye..... tān*' could have the universal sense, as intended by the redactor. Since the preceding line says, '*putrasahasraṃ kadrūr ājñāpayāmāsa*', the phrase '*nānvapadyanta ye vākyam,.....*' can be understood in an inclusive, non-partitive sense: 'She cursed those (1000) serpents, who (all) had not obeyed'. The relative could also be used in a causative sense: 'She cursed those serpents, who (because they) had not obeyed'. Or the author could have taken '*tān*' to be understood as an article-like filler, which specially later popular Sanskrit permits (cf. Speijer, *Sanskrit Syntax*, para. 275, 3), but is less likely in this syntactical setting.

#### *Recapitulation:*

(1) Kadrū's curse is unoriginal to the old, pre-Mahābhārata Suparṇākhyāna. It is introduced by the Mahābhārata redactor, not so much as an additional justification of the serpents' destruction in the Janamejaya sacrifice but in order to provide a basis to the story of Āstika. The question of Kadrū's non-revocation of the curse in



spite of her sons' subsequent obedience, a contradiction pointed out by Oldenberg, is not relevant. (2) The curse is universal as the disobedience is, from the point of view of the total context of the Āstikaparvan. (3) Two opposite readings, Northern and Southern, create the problem. The Northern reading is a '*lectio difficilior*' as against the explicit Southern variant, which is adopted by the Critical Edition. (4) The partitive-looking reading of the Northern recension is (contextually) to be understood in a universal sense.

*Emendation:*

Notwithstanding the above explanation, it is difficult to conceive that the archetypal author of the tale could have expressed himself in such a clumsy manner, precisely because he has greater freedom over style. There is always a distinction between an original author and a '*secunda manu*' redactor; the one composes and the other operates on a given text which restricts his freedom, to say nothing of the chances of his misinterpreting the original. Therefore, a more complete solution can be given as follows.

The important point is that we must give consideration to the whole complex sentence involved. The author has built it so that it overflows the śloka and forms one single sentence from śloka 6-8; in fact he has intended it as a kind of *kalāpaka* which gives a well-rounded syntactical construction. This is shown by the fact that there is no subject in 7d; it has to be supplied from 6-7ab, all the more since there is no '*ca*' joining the two co-ordinated verbs (*ājñāpayāmāsa* and *śaśāpa*).

If we reconstruct the main sentence we have:

*kadrūḥ putrasahasram ājñāpayāmāsa* ('*āviśadhvaṃ hayam*');  
*nānvapadyanta ye vākyaṃ tān śaśāpa bhujaṅgamān* ('*pāvako vaḥ  
pradhakṣyati*').

This śloka-overflowing sentence points to an original:

'*kadrūḥ putrasahasram ājñāpayāmāsa, nānvapadyanta ye vākyaṃ  
śaśāpa ca bhujaṅgamān*'.

The first verb (*ājñāpayāmāsa*) needs a '*ca*' for connecting with the second verb (*śaśāpa*) since it has the same singular subject, Kadrū. This is all the more necessary, since the two verbs are separated by two subordinate clauses with different (singular in 7b and plural in 7a) subjects. This has a more natural and idiomatic universal meaning than the previous one with *ye . . . . . tān*. It is: 'and she cursed the serpents, who ('*ye*') did not obey the command.'

But that '*ca*' can be made to fit into the śloka-pāda only by displacing the '*tān*', which is the word that most misleadingly points to



a partitive, non-universal meaning. Hence a smooth-running original would be:

(‘*putrasahasram ājñāpayāmāsa*’)

7c) ‘*nānvapadyanta ye vākyaṃ*

d) ‘*śasāpa ca bhujaṅgamān*

This shows that ‘*tān*’ could not be original. And yet it must have been in the Archetype, since it is uniformly supported by all the manuscripts. This logically necessitates an admission on our part of two layers—one ‘*prima manu*’ original and another ‘*secunda manu*’ redactorial, *within* the Archetype itself; and it is that last redactorial stage of the Archetype which marks the actual point of bifurcation (or trifurcation) of our recensions. And from now on we shall call the original text that of the First Archetypal Redactor (*FAR*), and the secondary one that of the Last Archetypal Redactor (*LAR*), meaning thereby either one person or one collective agency. This point of twofold archetypal-redactorial strata (*FAR* and *LAR*) has already been indicated in Chapter II. Thus we conclude that ‘*tān*’ must have been there as an archetypal correction of the *FAR*’s text by his successor, the *LAR*. Only that misleading correction from the original ‘*ca*’ into ‘*tān*’ can explain all the manuscriptal data in all their diversity.

The question is: Why did the *LAR* change the original ‘*ca*’ of his predecessor into ‘*tān*’? The explanation is: The *FAR*’s text is:

*nānvapadyanta ye vākyaṃ śasāpa ca bhujaṅgamān*

His successor, the *LAR* looks to the immediate context and not to the *FAR*-intended *kalāpaka* construction, which makes a full sentence by conjoining ‘*ājñāpayāmāsa*’ and ‘*śasāpa*’ by ‘*ca*’. The co-ordination of the juxtaposed ‘*nānvapadyanta*’ and ‘*śasāpa*’ having different subjects and numbers brought about by ‘*ca*’ in one single sentence sounds awkward to the *LAR*. The *LAR* thinks that since the command is finished in 7ab, this is a new sentence. So he, not very surprisingly under those circumstances, takes the two (the command and the disobedience-curse) separately, and sees an incongruity in,

‘*nānvapadyanta ye vākyaṃ śasāpa ca bhujaṅgamān*’

Hence he corrects the sentence. He wants to change, but is bound by the *FAR*’s text lying before him, as it is natural for a secondary redactor. So the result is a clumsy expression. The *LAR* thinks that since there is ‘*ye*’, it should be followed by the usual ‘*tān*’, which he does not intend in the exclusive, partitive sense, but rather — trusting in the context — in the inclusive, universal sense in



the manner already shown above. But the result betrays his hand, because for his new construction the subject, Kadrū is implicit, to be inferred (not grammatically construed, as in the original FAR's text) from the foregoing line, just as S does when he leaves, '*tad vākyaṃ nānvapadyanta tān śāsāpa bhujaṅgamān*', without an explicit subject in both clauses, even though that subject cannot be construed syntactically with the preceding sentence.

This is one of the clear cases in which the text-critical result obtained merely from the comparison of manuscripts does not yield a satisfactory reconstruction of the original text. The reason is that the reconstructed text contains an incongruity, which the sense and the spirit of the language do not permit. In that case the logic of text-criticism made us venture an emendation, which the idiom of the language, the sense and other objective reasons can support as the logical explanation of the data given by the manuscripts.

The conclusion is: The original archetypal text of the FAR is closer to N than to S, but contains a 'ca' supplanted by the LAR's 'tān'.

'prima manu' Archetype = *nānvapadyanta ye vākyaṃ śāsāpa  
ca bhujaṅgamān*

'secunda manu' Archetype = *nānvapadyanta ye vākyaṃ tān*  
(=N)

*śāsāpa bhujaṅgamān*

S = *tad vākyaṃ nānvapadyanta tān śāsāpa bhujaṅgamān*

We shall encounter further such cases in the course of this study, the 'nucleus' being the question of *adhy.* 19, App. 1.12 App. 1.13, (286\*), to which we have often made references in this chapter. Only after a due consideration of the problems solved in Chapters V and VI the validity and value of the present solution should be judged in function of those results.

#### General text-critical results:

- (1) Two redactorial text-layers in the Archetype: FAR and LAR.
- (2) All manuscripts derive from the redacted Archetype, i.e. the LAR's text superseding the FAR's.
- (3) The FAR's text is reachable by a deeper psychological-logical study of the manuscriptal data.
- (4) S is more redactorial and N is more conservative.



## CHAPTER V

### ADHYĀYA 18, 285\*

The same *adhy.* 18 presents another problem, that of 285\*, which contains the Prajāpati-episode. It is in continuation of the pronouncement of the curse by Kadrū. It is said: the Patriarch (Pitāmaha) Brahmā Himself heard this grim curse of the mother of the serpents, and He with the gods, looking to the huge number of virulent snakes infesting the world, approved of the curse in the interest of the world population (*śl.*10). And on account of their deadly venom, He gave to the great sage Kāśyapa (or Kaśyapa) the poison-curing lore for the good of the people (= llabcedf). At this place, a few manuscripts are seen reading 285\*, a passage of 10 lines. The passage is rejected by Sukthankar, quite rightly and consistently from the viewpoint of his own principles, and placed 'below the line.' The manuscripts backing that passage do not at all constitute a serried array. They are  $K_{0.3.4}V_1$  (marg.),  $Da_1DnD_{1-7}$ . Thus only D can be said to support the passage solidly and completely. These manuscripts are again mutually at variance as regards the order of insertion and number of lines of the passage. The detailed description is:  $K_{0.3.4}V_1$  (marg.)  $Da_1DnD_1$  (omitting line 7) 2.5.6 (omitting line 10) insert after llcd,  $D_3$  (omitting line 10) 4.7 (omitting lines 1, 2, 10) put it after llab. Thus even looking from our usually solid Centre-North recension viewpoint, Ñ and B are wanting. If there were any other passage with such weak manuscriptal evidence, the verdict that the passage is interpolational would be obvious.\* No one, (*ceteris paribus*), would dream of proposing such a passage as archetypal as it is done here, and proving that so many sub-redactors independently agreed in rejecting it. But in this particular instance, things are not as simple and straightforward as they

\* 'Even if we had only the Northern recension, the genuineness of 120, 12-16b [our 285\*] relating the conversation between the Creator (Brahman) and Prajāpati Kāśyapa might be doubted. But seeing the Southern text, there cannot be the least doubt that the two lines llcd and llcf belong together. Observe that in the Devanāgarī editions, śloka 10 has three lines, and that 11 and 12 are very loosely connected. The context according to the Southern recension is as follows:

On hearing the cruel curse pronounced by Kadrū against the snakes, Brahman, the Grandfather, approves of it, being aware that snakes had multiplied exceedingly, and being anxious for the welfare of creatures. (Translation of llcdef). 'For, to be sure, it was on account of the violent poisonousness of snakes and for the benefit of creatures, that he bestowed on Kāśyapa the art of destroying snake-poison.' Kāśyapa is probably the physician Kāśyapa, who wanted to cure King Parikṣit from the snake-bite. He is mentioned here very aptly in order to show how anxious Brahman was to protect men from the



may seem at first sight. Hence the need to deal with it by giving it at least the benefit of the doubt, and to investigate whether it can be shown to be archetypal. It may turn out in the final analysis that the passage in question has to be declared a suprious interpolation as done by Sukthankar. But the fact is that herein there is a very serious difficulty involved which is impossible to ignore. This demands a reinvestigation which is certainly worthwhile even if ultimately there should be no change of verdict with regard to the conclusion reached by Sukthankar. And it will be seen that there are weighty reasons for such a change.

It is certain that whether 285\* is archetypal or not, what little is to be found even in the Critical Edition's text about the Pitāmaha incident is ultimately redactorial, for the simple reason that the very curse of Kadrū (caused by the serpents' general disobedience) is an innovated element introduced, in all probability, by the archetypal redactor, who has incorporated the independent Ākhyāna into the main *Bhārata-kathā* via the Janamejaya sacrifice, as we have already discussed in the previous chapter. That being so, it is natural that whatever is connected with that curse is also equally redactorial.

Coming to the consideration of the passage itself, we notice in the first place that śl. 11 is anomalous being a six-pāda stanza which is the only one in this *adhyāya*.

<i>tigmavīryaviṣā hy ete dandaśūkā mahābalāḥ</i>	11ab
<i>teṣāṃ tikṣṇaviṣatvāddhi prajānāṃ ca hitāya vai</i>	11cd
<i>prādāt viśahaṇīm vidyām kāśyapāya mahātmane</i>	11ef

A further anomaly is that in this six-pāda stanza one line is hopelessly straggling without rhyme or reason. Considering

<i>teṣāṃ tikṣṇaviṣatvāddhi prajānāṃ ca hitāya vai</i>	11cd
<i>prādāt viśahaṇīm vidyām kāśyapāya mahātmane</i>	11ef

they make a well-built compact śloka. The sense goes smoothly from 10cd to 11cdef. This union of 11cd and 11ef is confirmed by a very strong body of manuscripts of both N and S. On the other hand, 11ab and 11ef do not construe at all,

<i>tigmavīryaviṣā hy ete dandaśūkā mahābalāḥ</i>	11ab
<i>prādāt viśahaṇīm vidyām kāśyapāya mahātmane</i>	11ef

In relation to 11cd, 11ab involves 'punarukti' by its 'tigmavīrya-visāḥ'. It also repeats 'hi' which makes the sentence clumsy. Fur-

poisonous snakes. In the Northern recension (or at any rate in the text known to us from the Devanāgarī editions) Kāśyapa was substituted for Kāśyapa, and the insipid conversation between Brahman and Prajāpati (Kāśyapa) came to be inserted.—Winternitz, loc. cit.

N substitutes 'Kāśyapa' for 'Kāśyapa' throughout, not just here. The introduction of the Prajāpati-Kāśyapa episode however is not so strange or 'insipid' by epic standards, since He is the father of the snakes through his wife, Kadrū.



ther, 11ab refers to the serpents as if they are present and near-by by using 'ete' (= these), as against *teṣāṃ* in 11cd, which is appropriate in a narrative and in referring to things past and distant. Besides, 11cdef appears to have no subject only because the disconnected, trailing line 11ab interferes.

It is precisely here that a not very prepossessing medley of manuscripts brings in the extra-passage (285\*), which rounds off the Prajāpati-episode. But there is also something very interesting about it. It cannot stand on its own feet, which it should if it were really insertional as Sukthankar would have us understand. Although made up of an even number of lines that should have a series of complete *ślokas*, it is not a self-sustained, self-contained unit, since it leaves two *pādas* hanging in the air both at the beginning and at the end, so that the complete *śloka*-pairs are only lines 2+3, 4+5, 6+7, 8+9. The passage looks especially truncated due to its isolated, non-*śloka*-forming l. 1.

If we now recall what we said about the inorganic nature of 11ab and advert to the incomplete character of l. 1 of 285\*, both loose and hanging, needing some complement, we may examine the two lines by putting them together. The presence of 'hi' makes their order obvious enough:

<i>yuktaṃ mātṛā kṛtaṃ teṣāṃ parapīḍopasarpiṇām</i>	285, 1
<i>tigmavīryaviṣā hy ete dandaśūkā mahābalāḥ</i>	11ab

(The question of the order of 285, 1 and 11ab will be discussed later on. Until then the order of 11ab and 285, 1 may be assumed. It won't matter, because the coherence of the two lines 11ab and 285, 1 is really of vital importance.) 285, 1 and 11ab are a part of the speech of the Pitāmaha in 9, and they are introduced by 'vacanaṃ cānvamodata' in 10b. That speech concludes with 285, 4 ('evaṃ sambhāṣya devas tu') to be followed by another speech of his in 285, 5 ff, and concluded in 285, 10 (*ity uktvā sṛṣṭikṛt devaḥ*). The language of 11ab agrees with that of 285\*. 'ete' in l. 6, 'etad' in l. 9, and mixed with 'teṣāṃ' in l. 1 and l. 3; and 'dandaśūkā(h) mahābalāḥ' in 11ab as in l. 6+7 'dandaśūkā(h) mahābhogāḥ'. There can be little doubt that this is the work of one and the same author and that originally the two halves (11ab and 285, 1) must have belonged together and were intended to stay together, for thus alone can they make sensible sense. That cannot be possibly due to mere accident. Thus, here there is a remarkably peculiar problem of two indissociable halves of a compact *śloka* having been slashed off through some copyistic-redactorial freak, so that one link (11ab) remains embedded in the main text being given by all and the other in the footnotes, not being well-documented. By the same



token 285\* also becomes archetypal along with its archetypal anchor 11ab.

To recapitulate the fundamental text-critical certainties in this context:

1. 11abcdef is a six-pāda stanza. 11ab is an inorganic element of this stanza. 11ab and 11cd do not construe at all. Same with 11ab and 11ef. 11cdef make a good complete *śloka*. 10abcd make a smooth transition to 11cdef. Therefore, 11cdef is original. Since 11ab does not fit into the original text formed by 10 and 11cdef and disturbing in syntax and sense, it must be an additional, secondary, and later insertion.
2. 11ab is also archetypal, as it is backed by all manuscripts without exception, so interpolation is out of the question.
3. 11ab and 285.1 go perfectly well. 285.1 and the whole 285\* are one. Hence 11ab and 285\* belong together; they stand or fall together and cannot be cleft text-critically. 285\* must therefore be archetypal and has indirectly (through 11ab) the same text-critical backing as 11ab. All the manuscripts including those that omit 285\*, virtually back it, since they all take over a component part of it, viz. 11ab.

Thus, 11ab is both archetypal and yet not as original as 11cdef. Consequently it must be the handiwork of a '*secunda manu*' archetypal redactor, and 11cdef must be attributed to the '*prima manu*' archetypal redactor. It is true that '*entia non sunt multiplicanda sine necessitate*'. But positing two redactorial strata within the Archetype is in consonance with this dictum. In fact the postulate is demanded by the textual data before us. The two archetypal redactors are styled the First Archetypal Redactor (*FAR*) and the Last Archetypal Redactor (*LAR*). The two redactorial levels were text-critically arrived at in Chapter IV and are being posited with greater probability in this Chapter.

In the present case, 10 and 11cdef belong to the *FAR*. 11ab does not belong to the *FAR*, but to the *LAR*, as well as 285\* which is tagged on to 11ab. Again, 285.10 and 11ef are seen to construe coherently,

<i>ity uktvā sṛṣṭikṛt devas taṃ prasādyā prajāpatim</i>	285,10
<i>prādāt viśahaṇim vidyām kāśyapāya mahātmane</i>	11ef

The two make a complete *śloka* and are in accordance with sense and syntax. This order is given by the main group of manuscripts. This means that 1.1 of 285\* comes after 11cd. But 11cd and 285, 1



are quite ill-fitting both in syntax and sense. 'teṣām' occurs in both the lines! They tell us that Kadrū had acted out of the most beneficent motives, which is exactly not the case. In view of all this, the inescapable conclusion is that the LAR had inserted his 11ab as a substitute of the FAR's pre-existing 11cd owing to the latter's similar sense. Thus he has supplanted the original 11cd by his own 11ab. And 11ab goes with 285, 1 and finally 285, 10 goes with 11ef.

Now, if 11ab and 285, 1 belong together, how did they come to be separated? Not only that, but as said above, 285, 1 and 11ab make a more accurate order from the grammatical point of view. 'hi' is to be understood in the sense of 'for, because of' and as such it should be in the second line. So the question is how 11ab and 285, 1 came to be in an inverse order. And how did 11ab come to be in all the N and S manuscripts, while 285, 1 together with the whole passage to which it clearly belongs, is omitted in the whole S and in so many manuscripts in the N? All this makes it an intriguing text-critical problem.

The solution lies in a graphic explanation. It is as follows:

The LAR must have added 285\* in such a way that it makes it possible for the copyists and the sub-redactors to retain and misplace it or to reject its whole bulk. But his addition also makes it impossible for them to omit 11ab in spite of its being not the first but the second line of 285\*. He must have arranged it so that all copyists and sub-redactors took 11ab in the wrong order of *pādas* with regard to its original *śloka* (= cdab).

This means that he made his interpolation (11ab+285\*) partly interlinearly and partly marginally. He put his 11ab interlinearly in the main text on top of 11cd, which was bracketted. Why? The lines,

285, 1—*yuktaṃ mātṛā kṛtaṃ teṣāṃ parapīḍopasarpiṇām* (ab)

11ab—*tigmavīryaviṣā hy ete dandaśūkā mahābalāḥ* (cd)

make a *śloka*. His real substitute line of the original 11cd is 11ab, (cd of the above *śloka*) and is therefore interlinearly introduced above 11cd. And he had to put 1.1 of 285 (ab) out in the margin, since it did not correspond to anything in the old text. All the other lines (285\*, 2-10) would naturally follow either on the margin, if that was ample (as it often is), or on a '*śodhapatra*', if small. A conventional sign '*kākapāda*' would link line 285, 1 (marginal) with 11ab (interlinear) and back to lines 2-10 (on the margin or '*śodhapatra*') and back to 11ef in the text. Thus:



10ab	<sup>1</sup> 285,1 <sub>2</sub>
10cd <sub>1</sub>	
<sup>2</sup> 11ab	<sup>3</sup> 285,2
(11cd) <sub>3</sub>	
<sup>4</sup> 11ef	285,3
	285,4
	285,5
	285,6
	285,7
	285,8
	285,9
	285,10 <sub>4</sub>

The only thing that made it complicated was the double cross-reference inside of the same passage—which is what helped to cause the confusion that the manuscripts actually show. The confusion would easily be worse confounded, if (as it is quite likely) the *LAR* used the same or a very similar '*kākapāda*' for the four cross-references needed by the insertion. For, the *LAR* had first to refer from 10cd in the main text (by 1) to link up with 285, 1 in the margin; and to link it up (by 2) with the interlinear 11ab in the main text; further, from 11ab (+11cd in brackets under it) in the main text (by 3) to link up with 285, 2 in the margin; finally, from 285, 10 in the margin (by 4) to link up with 11ef in the main text. The *LAR* could have used the same sign, or made a slight difference for clarity, since for him the sequel was quite clear. But the copyists would naturally be confused and lost. First they copied 11ab as being on top of 11cd as if it was meant to be before it. The bracketted 11cd was also copied. If one thinks of the Archetype as an old and already authoritative exemplar, the old text would be accepted, even though bracketted. The copyists were also possibly misled by the fact that 11ab looked like the justifying end of 10 (because of the '*hi*' clause), while 11cd was needed to make some sense and sentence and a complete *śloka* either with 11ef (if they dropped 285\*) or with 285, 1 (if they accepted 285\*). Hence all copyists took over all that was in the main body of the text and in the order in which it was there with the interlinear 11ab first as being on top. That explains fully the state of our manuscripts. But 285\* is marginal and obviously additional and not traditional; hence the sub-redactors' different reactions.

The whole *S* rejected 285\*, though betraying its excision by keeping the tell-tale 11ab, an integral part of the excised text. And in general, there were good reasons for excising 285\*. There is a



reference to the Pitāmaha's intervention in Kadrū's curse in *adhy.* 32 (for Śeṣa) and *adhys.* 33 and 34 (for Vāsuki and Elāpatra), and again in *adhy.* 35 (the gods interceding for Vāsuki). In all those cases, but especially in the fuller description of Elāpatra (*adhy.* 34), Brahmā intervenes indicating that there is a way out, since the curse, though universal, will not be carried out in full. But in 285\* there is a clear and explicit confirmation of the curse and of its fulfilment without any attenuation of its effects. On the contrary it supports the curse and the snakes' destruction on the ground of their wickedness and their fate, which is not quite in agreement with the various other references in *adhys.* 32-35. Further, any careful redactor could see that the main archetypal text (with the interlinear 11ab considered as rounding off 10) made sufficiently bearable sense. But by joining 11cd with l. 1 of 285\* (as the text indicates, and the supporting manuscripts mostly show this order), one got non-sense or what sounded like it, viz.

11cd *teṣāṃ tīkṣṇaviṣatvād hi prajānāṃ ca hitāya vai*

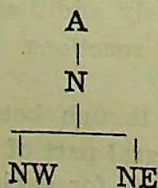
285, 1 *yuktaṃ mātṛā kṛtaṃ teṣāṃ parapīdopasarpiṇām*

as if Kadrū had acted with the best of intentions. Besides, there seems to be a confusion between the Prajāpati Kāśyapa and the poison-curing Brāhmaṇa Kāśyapa, inasmuch as N put Kāśyapa. And, Pitāmaha, though there is a normal conclusion of it and an introduction and conclusion of the second speech.

All these difficulties contributed to the redactors' aversion already awakened by the obvious marginal-additional nature of 285\* with those complicated references and cross-references. The basic opposition between the main and the marginal, plus the above reasons could be sufficient for any sub-redactor to excise the passage.

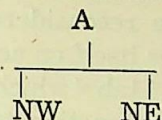
As for N, it is not impossible to argue that it took over 285\* originally in the recensional sub-archetype N but kept it exactly as it was in the Archetype, i.e. as marginal in its own sub-archetype, if there was a single sub-archetype for all the N-versions (as Sukthankar held). Some of the versional sub-redactors accepted it but others rejected it as S had done, and for similar reasons.

Sukthankar's scheme





Our scheme



But if the N had really two branches (NW and NE) directly derived from the Archetype (as Edgerton held and we in agreement with him), then it is possible that these sub-archetypal copies (NW and NE) carried the passage originally exactly as it was in the Archetype i.e. as marginal, since those copies would have been made by a mere copyist; but the same passage was then excised by bracketting, by the (NW and NE) redactor-editors proper who revised and edited the respective copyist-made sub-archetypes, for the very similar reasons that had moved the S-redactor. This bracketting was accepted as final by some versional sub-redactors ( $\tilde{N}$ , B,  $V_1$ ), who eliminated the passage; but was not accepted by other versional sub-redactors (D and K). Even inside of a version (K), there are different reactions of excision or acceptance. Even among those that accept it as a whole, some show their uneasiness by partial excision, because of the extra-*pādas* and the difficulty of forming complete normal *ślokas*. Hence some transfer 11cd to the end of 285\*, and at the same time excise line 10 in that passage quite illogically. They obviously do so to dodge the six-*pāda śloka* at the beginning and to adapt their text to some other manuscripts (due to contamination), which have 11cdef as the final *śloka*. But these manuscripts are fewer in comparison with the majority backing 285\* (in K and D versions), which place 285\* after 11cd.  $V_1$  has the passage marginally which is clearly due to contamination.

This has explained the facts presented by the manuscripts, both in their support of the extra-passage 285\* and in their omission of it. The peculiarity of this text-critical case of 285\* consists in the fact that, in spite of its relatively weak direct manuscriptal support, it has an indirect universal backing of all the manuscripts through the pivotal text 11ab. 11ab is both an archetypal text and an integral part of 285\*. Hence, though redactorial and belonging to the '*secunda manu*' LAR, textual layer, 11ab+285\* is archetypal.

The various excising reasons are pointed out only in order to explain what possibly could have provoked the later sub-redactors to suppress the passage. The main graphic reason is also pointed out as a possibility, which has to be reasonably reckoned with in order to explain the '*modus operandi*' of the copyists and the redactors. Nevertheless, as observed above, no one would ever dare propose this passage with such a weak documentary support as of archetypal origin, but would ungrudgingly put it down as a sub-



redactorial adventitious interpolation. But there is a very serious difficulty against this step. The reconsideration of 285\* as to its possible archetypal nature justifies itself on account of its being based on the unassailable argument of 11ab (which is undoubtedly archetypal) being in an inevitable conjunction with 285, 1 and *a pari* with the whole 285\*. This is the spearhead of the argument, and grants the final title to the acceptability of 285\* as being archetypal. As long as this central fact of 11ab and 285, 1 stands, the facts in the manuscripts must be explainable in some reasonable way, since the manuscripts (whether supporting or omitting) do actually derive from an original presence of 11ab+285\* in the archetypal source. The above explanation only tries to account for the textual divergences in function of what could possibly happen in the manuscriptal transmission. Basically, it is guided by the principle of logical interpretation of the textual data.

The consequences of this conclusion are of importance for the Mahābhārata text-criticism, in that they illustrate the principles laid out in Chapter II.

1. The Archetype contained two textual layers: an original (*FAR*), and a secondary-redactorial one (*LAR*). It is their joint product and our manuscripts are derived directly from the text as retouched by the *LAR*, which is really the Archetype of our manuscripts. At times we may be able to distinguish the *LAR*'s text from the *FAR*'s, as in this case of 285\*. Thus, our critical reconstruction of the Archetype reaches the *LAR*'s text, and also, the *FAR*'s text behind it.

2. There is the possibility in the Mahābhārata text transmission not only of redactorial addition, but also of redactorial excision, even though less general and to be considered specially in each case. The case of 285\* is a case of special circumstances and it shows what kind of special circumstances we may have to take into consideration to show the possibility of excision in other similar cases. Besides, there is conflict in the matter of excision not only between intra-recensional versions (*K*+*D* vs *ÑB*) and between intra-versional manuscripts (*K*<sub>1</sub>*K*<sub>2</sub>), but also between the two main recensions, *N* and *S*.

3. The text-critical methodology cannot go by any inflexible rule, but must be based on the consideration of individual cases, if their individual factors demand it. In this case the solid support of Centre-North was also missing and yet 285\* could be shown, not without adequate justification, to be archetypal.



## CHAPTER VI

### ADHY. 19, APP. 1.13, APP. 1.12, 286\*

#### OUTLINE

Factors of the Problem: Adhyāya 19 (First ocean-description), App. 1.12 (Second ocean-description), App. 1.13 (Snake Council), Extra-passage 286\* (Karkoṭaka-episode).

(i) Pivotal problem of a gap in the Critical Edition acknowledged even by Sukthankar. Excision of App. 1.13 by Sukthankar—Criticism.—Archetypal nature of the passage. (ii) Excision of App. 1.12 by Sukthankar—Criticism.—Archetypal nature of the passage. (iii) Excision of 286\* by Sukthankar—Winternitz's view shown to be untenable—Objections to 286\*—Sukthankar's rejection upheld.

Order of 19, 13, 12—Doubt as regards the genuineness of lines 6, 3 and 2 of 13—Two archetypal stages of '*prima manu*' and '*secunda manu*' redactors distinguished—Original position of 13 before 19 and 12 in the primary archetypal layer—Transfer of 13 between 19 and 12, effected by the second archetypal redactor — Graphic factor considered.

Sub-redactorial stage of recensional and versional activities fully discussed—Final solution—Global significance for the Mahābhārata redactorial tradition.

In this chapter we stumble upon a veritable imbroglio, the problem par excellence in the Ākhyāna, the final solution of which would go to illustrate our text-critical principles and method. It is, in other words, the mainstay of our text-critical study. It contains the scrutiny of the various text-critically related passages (such as *adhy.* 19(19) App. 1.13(13) App. 1.12(12) and 286\*), which, directly or indirectly, centre around the two sisters' bet, the pivotal episode of the Ākhyāna, and its riddle, namely, how Kadrū could win the bet, if the snakes all disobeyed. The whole question is fraught with textual complications. Curiously enough, here we are upholding versional passages as against a whole recension and versions of the same recension, which is text-critically something very extra-ordinary.

#### App. 1.13:

We would first take up the question of 13 (the Snakes' Council), in which the recalcitrant snakes finally decide to fulfil Kadrū's



command. Reading the Critical Edition we find a glaring contradiction in the story of the sisters' bet. The situation according to it is this: On the one hand, in *adhy.* 18, we see all the serpents point-blank refusing to play the trick planned by their mother, so that they all are on that score ruthlessly cursed by her; and on the other hand in the very next scene, we see Ucchaiśravas's white tail turned black by the same serpents in dutiful compliance with their mother's wish.—There is thus a yawning gulf in the continuity of the narrative. At the same time it is most unlikely that Sukthankar should not have noticed it. In fact, his scholarly conscience was not a little disturbed at this disquieting lacuna in his own text, as shown by '*addenda et corrigenda*', and especially by his Private Edition. However, the conundrum seems to be resolved in a six-lined passage called App. 1.13. The existence of this passage in the manuscriptal apparatus gives rise to a real dilemma for Sukthankar. It contains the solution of the riddle; and yet the documentary attestation here is a '*rudis indigestaque moles*', quite disconcertingly jumbled. The passage is backed by a messy and deficient testimony, which has naturally led Sukthankar, quite in consonance with his own text-critical principles, to reject the passage and relegate it to the Appendix. The result is that he has accepted this baffling contradiction or rather a hiatus in his Critical Edition and therefore in the story.

The real crux is pointed out by Sukthankar in his Private Edition (p. 169), 'There is no indication that the serpents tried to revoke the curse. They certainly did change the colour of the horse's tail; but how and why they did it after first refusing to do so, is not mentioned in our story. What they did with reference to the curse is narrated in *adhy.* 33. The points unexplained in the narrative are where and why the serpents decide to fall in with the plans of Kadrū after their first refusal and how they achieved the deception.' Thus, the eventual co-operation of the serpents after their initial general disobedience constitutes the real gap. The actual compliance in between is necessary to the story and its natural logic. With regard to 13 as solving this difficulty, Sukthankar says, 'The interpolated *adhyāya* tries to surmount the difficulty, but without success.'

However, Sukthankar, who at first was inclined to think that there was a real gap in the original text of the story, came later to accept the opinion of F. Belloni Filippi that there was only a fancied gap and not a real one. He writes in '*addenda et corrigenda*', 'In the stimulating article\* F. Belloni-Filippi has sought to prove,

\* F. Belloni Filippi, "L'episodio di Kadrū e di Vinatā nell'edizione critica del Mahābhārata", Traduzioni di epica indiana II, *Ascoli Memorial Volume, Silloge Linguistica* (Torino, 1930).



with much probability, on intrinsic evidence, that passage No. 13 of App. 1, which is missing in  $K_1\tilde{N}BTG_{3.6}M$  (being found only in  $K_{0.2-4}V_1$  (marg.), D and in the 4 conflated Grantha manuscripts  $G_{1.2.4.5}$ ) is in fact, an interpolation; that the lacuna in the manuscripts in which the passage is missing is only apparent; and that the *textus simplicior* (which agrees with the constituted text) is quite in order.'

We shall consider first F. Belloni Filippi's arguments. He thought that the text did not mean that there had been disobedience but only reluctance and tardiness in the execution, which was enough to bring about the curse. He says, 'It is evident that an unknown redactor — worried by the fact that *śl.* 2 of Chapter 20 (*adhy.* 23 of the Vulgate), speaks of the executing of the trick without having first made a reference to the repentance of the serpents, — filled up with this interpolation what he supposed to be a lacuna. But the worry of the redactor was, in spite of all, unfounded. In fact, the *śl.* 7 of Chapter 18 makes the mother say, 'Go at once to attach yourself to the horse.' But to her command the proud children did not conform. In the text there does not appear the word '*anuvarta*' or '*anurudh*' (to obey) but '*anu + pad* which means, 'to go straight, to follow, to conform', and this means that they did not execute the order immediately, and the delay is enough to provoke the curse, which curse was not usually liable to be revoked. (Asked to withdraw the curse upon Śakuntalā, the irascible Durvāsā answers, 'my word cannot become false.') In our case, the sanction of Pitāmaha in person excludes the thought of the possibility of a revocation. Hence there is no lacuna in the '*textus simplicior*'. Tardily the children decide to follow the maternal order, and the curse is the penalty for their reluctance. The poet cannot tie himself to each and every particular feature, satisfied with kindling the imagination of the reader in order that it may be like a steed unto itself in the fantastic voyage. The winged charger which the poet rides jumps over lakes and precipices in its uninterrupted flight, but the miserable hack of a pedantic redactor stops even before a small trench and, without bridge, he cannot pass. In our episode, the bridge is chapter 22 of Vulgate (=13). Its expunction from the critical text demonstrates the value of the methods adopted by the Poona editor in the reconstitution of the text.' (Translated from the Italian original).

All this we find hard to swallow. In the first place, it is wrong to say that the curses are not revoked. In fact, even Durvāsā did temper his curse. So, the snakes would at least hope for that. And here Prajāpati does soften it by his intervention. Yet all this is



irrelevant to our problem, as discussed above. The real point is that the root 'anu + pad' shows no trace of that so precise meaning, "not to do promptly" as may be seen by consulting the Petersburg Dictionary. In it the correct translation of the typical phrase 'na anvapadyanta kimcana' is 'he did not do anything'. Further, one may consider the style of our narrator in this tale that describes the actions and reactions of his characters in minute detail. Therefore the least we would expect would be something like: 'Then the snakes being terrified by the curse, fulfilled their mother's command in the hope that their mother might relent (or at least, to appease her continued anger).' Moreover the poet also relates in great detail (*adhys.* 32-35) how they met in council to devise a means to counteract the curse. Thus, decidedly there is no solution the way F. Belloni Filippi suggests. Our poet, with leisurely and detailed style of narration, could not let it go with that one word (even if the learned scholar were right in understanding it) at such a crucial point in the story, all the less when it really means what it sounds, 'they did not obey'.

The case of 13 is a very special one, and the view that it belongs to the Archetype is propounded only because of very special circumstances (not unlike those of 285\*). The episode itself is a case of '*Si non e vero e ben trovato*' on the face of it and considering the contents of the manuscripts supporting it. As regards direct documentary evidence, it is based at best on D+K (-K<sub>1</sub> which belongs to Ś). Yet, despite its *prima facie* weak attestation, it has a considerable weightage of intrinsic probability, both textual and contextual. The value of the passage is both positive, because it solves the riddle and also negative, because it gives motives for excision.

The various positive reasons are:—(1) Its high intrinsic importance is evidenced by the fact that it is indispensably needed to explain an essential point of the tale, namely, the above-mentioned puzzle (general disobedience and yet fulfilment), so that without it the text would be maimed. Since the alternative is an illogical lacuna, we must investigate the text-critical standing of the passage and to give it a preliminary benefit of the doubt. (2) *a priori*, it is inconceivable that the archetypal redactor, the modeller of the new tale, should leave the text in such an unconvincing condition as shown by the Critical Edition. The composer could never have overlooked such a gaping lacuna precisely in this place containing such an important point of the entire episode. We can reasonably maintain that he put an explanation of the difficulty in question, viz. a command disregarded by the serpents through a universal disobedience; and yet properly executed by those very rebels. Now,



(as discussed in Chapter IV) the author of the curse could have found in the pre-Mahābhārata original tale the feature of Kadrū's trickery plus immediate general obedience of the serpents, and he could merely have changed immediate general obedience into immediate general disobedience so as to find an opportunity of introducing the curse into his version to link up with Janamejaya's sacrifice. He is thus the innovator of Kadrū's curse and the serpents' general disobedience causing it. As such he could not have inadvertently forgotten to introduce the sequel of his own innovation which ought to be so prominently clear before his mind's eye! It may be true that even Homer occasionally nods, but this would be a 'Himālayan' nod from the story-teller's logical-psychological-literary point of view. Hence the archetypal redactor as the composer is bound to have effected a suitable transition in accordance with his new and peculiar design. A man who is dexterous enough to weave such a sub-epic-like Janamejaya story could not have reduced his tale in this point to an incredible thing, that the serpents should unexpectedly and without any explanation appear on the scene at the right time after having all disregarded their mother's command. We can be sure *a priori*, that the redactor must have included in his tale a solution of that contradiction. It is enough to see how skilfully and explicitly he connects other originally independent stories like the *Pauṣyaparvan* and still more the *Paulomaparvan* with the new central theme of the Janamejaya-sacrifice. He does not leave loose threads untied. Even if a slipshod story-telling were by chance possible in a different case, it is certainly not possible for this particular story-teller in this story in the context of his style where each step is explained in a leisurely manner at all stages. Even in our larger story this is shown by the repetition of the generality of the curse, the minutely detailed devising of means to find a deliverance from the impending doom, in the serpent-council (cf. *adhy.* 33), the repeated assurances sought by Vāsuki (cf. *adhy.* 35), and the Elāpatra-episode (cf. *adhy.* 34), etc. To conceive this one and the same archetypal author-redactor giving the command, disobedience, curse and its Prajāpati-sequel and yet dismissing this particular situation in a nodding manner without saying a word about the express execution of Kadrū's trick so painstakingly prepared, is too much against the genius of epic story-telling and style in general, and of this redactor's explicating style in particular. He couldn't have left such a hiatus in the story, even granting that he might possibly describe the situation in a brief manner without much detail. (3) *a posteriori* there is the evidence of a full-blooded passage that does away with the contradiction in the expected manner. Actually, we do find in that small passage 13, the 'missing link' of our story. If there were no rests of what-



ought-to-be in the entire range of the Critical Apparatus, we might not feel so resolutely reluctant to admit an original flaw. But, as we can see, some manuscripts do have the passage, which is of a type, in style and contents, quite in keeping with the trends of the rest of the story. Here an interesting question may possibly arise as to why the contents of this 13, if it is so crucial as it is made out to be, are nowhere else mentioned in the Āstikaparvan. The reply is, there is no need to allude to 13 in the tale outside the Ākhyāna. The point of how Kadrū won the wager is absolutely unimportant for the redactor's purpose in the global context of the Āstikaparvan. It is vitally important only inside the Suparṇākhyāna; that is to say, the redactor-interpolator of the sub-epic of Janamejaya's snake-sacrifice is naturally not directly and chiefly interested in the bet and its result, but only in the curse and its fulfilment, of course, as far as his larger design is concerned. Moreover, there is no revocation of the curse on account of the fulfilment of the command. Hence there is no need to mention it elsewhere.

As a matter of fact, throughout the manuscriptal testimony, we find everywhere one or the other solution of the riddle; some Northern manuscripts solve it with the help of 13, though they do not need it after the partitive '*nānvapadyanta ye vākyam*' (with '*tān*'). This very fact of additional justification becomes an extra-evidence of the fact that they have preserved an old original archetypal relic. The other Northern manuscripts not having 13 do without any bridge after their partitive meaning of 18, 7cd. According to these manuscripts there is no difficulty at all, because (according to them), some serpents do obey. On the other hand, the whole South has 286\*, the Karkoṭaka-passage, which effectively bridges the gap. Thus the old redactors are not worried, since there is no contradiction or lacuna in their texts. It is only in our critical text that the difficulty lies. So we should rather endeavour to interpret the manuscriptal evidence in such a manner that the so-called contradiction is reconciled in the Archetype itself, from which all those manuscripts come. The Archetype is unlikely to have a gap. (4) The legitimacy of 13 finds a very strong though indirect justification based on internal evidence. Besides the implicit allusion in 20, 2, '*niśāmya ca bahūn vālān*', we come across several references (such as, '*sarpair upadhinā kṛtam*'—23, 9d, '*kadrūputrān anusmaran, smṛtvā caivopadhikṛtam*'—30, 11bc, '*tad vijñāya hṛtam sarpāḥ prati-māyākṛtam ca tat*'—30, 19ab). These indications within the Ākhyāna show that the serpents had participated in the trick and assisted their mother. It was thus their treachery that was responsible for the hostility and vindictiveness of Garuḍa against them. Thus the story-teller's explicit mention of the serpents' treachery proves



the subesquent co-operation of the serpents.

It may be objected that all these references are directly connected with the actual act of treachery, and not with the source of that act, i.e. the deliberation leading to it. This is true, but our contention is that in view of the explicit disobedience and subsequent explicit references to the serpents' treachery fulfilling their mother's trickery, it makes the act a logical impossibility, unless a reason for the change of mind is plainly indicated by the narrator. There ought to be a specific mention of the change of mind on the part of the serpents, and that is given in 13.

All these reasons individually and cumulatively establish that 13 must have been in the Archetype, as coming after the universal non-cooperation followed by a curse. At least it can be affirmed that any passage with such backing of cogent logical reasons, despite inadequate documentary testimony, has a very strong intrinsic probability of genuineness in its favour. It is obligatory on our part to show how and why the passage can be said to provide motives to the later sub-redactors for excision. We come to this negative aspect of the passage later on.

#### *App. 1.12:*

We now proceed to another passage viz. 12, containing an ocean-description very similar to the one in 19. The final solution of the question of 13 can only be given in conjunction with that of the problems presented by the connected texts, especially 12. The passage is relegated by Sukthankar to the Appendix. The documentary evidence is scanty, because the passage is not backed by the agreement of the Extreme versions (Ś<sub>1</sub>K & S). And so Sukthankar is quite consistent in rejecting the passage. However, we believe that the passage is archetypal. Our positive reasons for this view are as follows:—

(1) A close scrutiny or even a cursory comparison of the two ocean-descriptions in 19 and 12 would convince one that the former is more complete, refined and polished, more ornate and elaborate than the latter, which is shorter and simpler. The description in 19 manifestly looks like a redactorial amplification or an enlarged echo of the one in 12. It is simply unthinkable, therefore, that these duplicate descriptions in such close togetherness could be deliberately composed by one and the same hand. So the implication that the NE sub-redactor has interpolated 12 on top of 19 (which is certainly archetypal as being universally documented) must be considered as quite implausible. No normal redactor who has 19 in his text before him is ever likely to dream of newly making and ad-



joining the repetitious 12; at most one may use it if received from tradition. Had there been a longer and more ornate passage than 19 in NE, one can easily say that it is an insertion by NE. Yet, it is possible *vice versa*, i.e. if 12 is original, 19 could not unnaturally come to be redactorially amplified on its basis, because 12 is less refined. This logically implies that 12 must, in addition to being archetypal be more primitive than even the obviously archetypal 19. It has a claim to logical-causal precedence over 19. The point is: We find the NE-redactor including 12 in this context besides 19. But he cannot be said to interpolate 12 (since it is obviously an unnecessary '*punarukti*' after what has been said in a better way in 19, unless tradition gives it to him. Therefore, the redactor is merely following his omnivorous conservatism in preserving archetypal contents irrespective of their superfluity. For the passage is such (especially in its contiguity with 19) that no redactor would find any attraction to interpolate it; while its presence in the Archetype would be a sufficient reason for the conservative NE-redactor to transmit it unaltered and unexcised. Hence we conclude that the NE-redactor actually found the passage in the Archetype.

To reinforce this conclusion by the text itself, we shall study the details that clearly indicate that 19 is an improvement of 12. This involves a thorough-going comparison of the two ocean-descriptions in 19 and 12.

We have given the texts 19 and 12 side by side in the Appendix. Cross references (such as 1c, 2a etc.) point to the parallel texts, when not exactly opposite.

This detailed study is akin to the one of 'original doublets' in Chapter II.

#### *Comparison of 19 and 12:*

We would particularly point out the differences and the improving changes made in 19. Identical words and similar concepts are indicated in the text by double and single lines under them. They are adopted by the composer of 19 from the received materials of 12 in his improved version.

The first glaring point is the additional mythological matter in 19, 10-14, to which nothing corresponds in 12. So it is reasonable to consider 19 as a larger version of 12. The opposite course would be unthinkable, i.e. if 12 were a later abridgement of 19, an abridger would naturally not leave out a whole set of *ślokas* with so distinctive contents; while, if he wanted variety he would take precisely those *ślokas* and briefly incorporate them into his description.



Further, in the parallel *śloka*s 1 and 2, the new matter in 19 is a reshaping of the situation in 12, where the two sisters go to test the facts immediately or shortly after their bet, (or at least it sounds like it). But the new situation (with sufficient time for the trickery, disobedience plus curse) needs a night's interval. Hence 19 puts '*rajanīyāṃ vyuṣṭāyāṃ prabhāte udite ravau*'. It does not at once say that the two sisters crossed the ocean (as in 12), but says that they went to see the horse at close quarters and 'saw the ocean'. Besides, 19 says here that the sisters are in the psychological situation of angry contention, and therefore corrects '*paramaprīte*' of 12 into '*amarṣite susaṃprabdhē*'. Again, the bet is indicated in 12 by '*paṇitam kṛtvā*', but 19 obviously improves it by '*dāsyē kṛtapane*'. The change '*dvijasattama*' (in 12) into '*tapodhana*' may be an improvement, but it may merely be a metrical need in 19 due to its new matter and the reshuffling of '*bhaginyau te*'. Besides, the order of the sentence is much more natural in 19 (especially in the position of the identical *pāda* '*kadruś ca vinatā caiva*'), being completed in two full *śloka*s and beginning a new one in 3. 19 visibly improves, since it opens the ocean-description proper with a new *śloka* through an initial verb ('*dadṛśāte*') governing all the accusatives, while 12 opens the description in the middle of *śloka* 2, and clumsily makes the whole description with a series of accusatives hung on a subordinate participle '*ālokyantīyau*', which is part of the subject '*te bhaginyau*'. There is a new independent sentence in 19, 15 with '*dadṛśāte*' at the opposite end of the description. And, finally he repeats in the *sargabandha*-end stanza (19, 16) by a kind of summing up using '*dadṛśātuḥ*'. There can be little doubt that all this is an intended stylistic improvement on the ungainly '*ālokyantīyau*' in 12. The only new element in 12 is 2b' '*dākṣāyaṇyau vihāyasā*'. But since the whole 19 avoids any reference to the actual crossing (which is only in 12 and in 19, 17), and stresses the viewing, it is clear that '*vihāyasā*' must naturally disappear, while '*dākṣāyaṇyau*' being a mere filler-epithet must make place for the new matter introduced by 19 into his *śloka*. Besides, '*akṣobham*' in 12, 2c cannot be in 19, since its *pādas* 9ab (q.v.) are incompatible with it.

The above study of *śloka*s 1-3ab shows that a redactorial transition from an original 12 to an improved-amplified 19 is quite justifiable.

This is further confirmed by the way the other differences in the description of the ocean point in the same direction of 19 improving upon 12. Let us examine them in detail.



In 3c, 19 adds one sea-monster in 'timingilajhaṣākīrṇam' to the 'timingilasamākīrṇam' of 12. No one who had 19 would suppress 'jhaṣa' in favour of the filler-like alternative in 12. In 4, we see the improving change in 19. 'ca' is put because it makes it clear that the description merely continues, and also because 'api' can be misunderstood as 'even'. The forceful 'rūpaiḥ samāvṛtam' enchances the less vivid 'vidhaiḥ saṃyutam', and the word-order is also more meaningful. No redactor would go from 19 to 12.

In 4cd, 19 shows redactorial features vs. 12:

12 ghorair ghoram anādhṛṣyaṃ gaṃbhīram atibhairavam

19 ugrair nityam anādhṛṣyaṃ (kūrmagrahasamākulam)

It is 19 that has good reason to change, because it uses the words of 12 in its 8:

19, 8 ghoram jalacarārāvaraudraṃ bhairavaniḥsvanam  
gaṃbhīrāvartakalilam

Besides, it uses 'gaṃbhīram' again in 16. Here 19 obviously wants to complete the list of the sea-monsters with 'kūrma + graha', which cannot be omitted in this catalogue. 'ghorair ghoram' is improved by 19, 4cd which enchances by 'nityam'. But if the latter had been there, 12 would have had no plausible reason to change, especially since it already uses 'gaṃbhīram' in 19, 17.

There can be no doubt that 19, 5cd is editorially improving on 12, 5cd. In 12 'cāpi' is obviously a 'pūraṇa' (especially after 'ca' in the previous pāda), and so is the 'su' before 'ramyam'; and above all, it has to be made clear by 19 that it is 'ālaya' that is 'ramya', not 'saritām patih'. But then the latter calls for an epithet—hence 'uttamam'. No redactor would feel called upon to go from 19 to 12.

As for 6, it springs to the eye that 19, 6b improves on 12, 6b to dodge still one 'ālaya' by its 'bandhana'. In 6cd, 19 changes 'avyayam', because it uses it in its 12d (q.v.). It obviously does not relish 12's 'payaso nidhim' vs. its own more common 'payasām nidhim' (corresponding to 'ambhasām nidhim' in its 16 and 3b. But then it has to avoid 'bhayaṅkarānām sattvānām' which appears to go with 'payasām' (which is precisely what 12 had also tried to avoid by its 'payasaḥ'). 'bhayaṅkarānām sattvānām' of 12 seems cut off from its original anchor 'asurānām ālayam' by being placed in the second half of the śloka. Hence 19 changes it into 'bhayaṅkarānām ca sattvānām' as a variation, in agreement with his own 8d 'sarva-bhūtabhayaṅkaram'. Every detail points to 19 improving up 12.

The single difference in 7d also speaks to the same effect. Here it is clear that 19 improves the text of 12—and that no redactor would do vice versa. 19 also improves by his concise 'supuṇyajalam'.



As for 12, 8d, it is improved upon the amplified by 9cd of 19. The parallel for 12, 8abc is 19, 15. The reason why 12, 8 finds its improved equivalent in two different widely separated stanzas, 19, 8 and 15, is again an obvious indication of the editorial work of 19 up 12. Not only has 19—as we saw above—changed for clarity's sake the dependent 'ālokayantyaṁ' into an independent 'dadṛśāte', but it has, for clarity's sake, cut the long-drawn description into two independent sentences, the second ending in 15 with 'dadṛśāte mahārṇavam'. For that he needs the last *pāda* in 15. Hence he makes use of the highly picturesque 'nṛtyantam iva', at a place approximately parallel to 12, 8 (in his 19, 9) imaginatively amplifying it. He keeps the bulk of 12, 8 for his final *śloka* 19, 15 thus making his 19, 15 correspond to the relative position of the final 12, 8. In this way he has his two complete *śloka*-sentences: one beginning with 'dadṛśāte' in 3a up to 6d (ending in 'arṇavam'), and another beginning, in all likelihood, with 7a and ending with 15d: 'dadṛśāte mahārṇavam'. Any attempt at explaining all those differences in the opposite direction (from 19 to 12) will stumble at the implausibility of any logical-psychological motivation.

Coming now to the actual text of 19, 15 vs. that of 12, 8, it is impossible not to see that 19 is the improving version. The texts speak for themselves. The fact that 19, 15c is a 'hypermetric *pāda*' agrees well with its being attributed to the original redactor of the Archetype, whose text does contain such metrical licences (of the type, 'janamejayasya rājarṣeḥ' in 18, 8c) while his successor-redactors preserve them.

19, 16 and 19, 17. Finally the comparison of the two *sarga-bandha*-end stanzas 19, 16 and 19, 17 with their similarities and differences. Looking at these two final high-*kāvya* stanzas, it is evident that their similarities, verbal as well as metrical make it impossible to regard them as completely independent. They are textually in a relation of dependence, which is in the same direction as 12 (original) to 19 (improvement).

19 introduces some variety here as well in consonance with its variations and additions in the rest of the description. Hence the elimination of the feature in 17c common to both in 6a (*pātālajvalana*) in favour of 16b.

Thus:

19, 17c *pātālajvalanaśikhāvidipitaṁ tam*  
 19, 16b *garjantaṁ jalacarārāvaraṇaudramādaḥ*

This is all the more understandable, because 'pātāla' is mentioned already twice in 19 (6a and 12d), while in 12 it occurs only once.



Besides, 19 has a similar reference to the oceanic fire in 14d, 'dadṛśatuh' in 19, 16 is attached to 'jagmatuh draṣṭum' in 19, 2 and 'ity evaṃ paśyantyau abhipetatuh' (or rather 'abhi-jagmatuh') of 19, 17 is connected with 'jagmatuh ālokayantyau' of 12, 1-2. So 'ity evaṃ' is substituted in 19, 16 by 'gaṃbhīram'. The metrical accommodation of 'dadṛśatuh' makes it necessary to substitute 'vikasitam' by 'vistīrṇam'. In 16a, since 19 has already got 'jhaṣa' in 3c, it is variated by 'timi' and while metrically it is forced to keep 'makara' (common to both) it tries to variate 'ūrmi' of 19, 17. This is a word used by both descriptions before (19, 10b and 12, 8d), but here 19 objects to it because it is not on a par with the other members of the compound, 'timimakara'. Hence 19 combines the latter with a double adjective which makes the ocean formidable and crowded ('ugrasaṃkula') due to 'timimakara'.

There is one small detail that deserves mention. It is that 19, 17c shows a double, obviously faulty, 'tam'. Many manuscripts solve it by reading 'dīpitāṅgam' for the superfluous second 'tam'. 'dīpitāṅgam' seems better backed by the manuscripts *contra* the Critical Edition.

The result of this entire detailed examination of the ślokas of 19 and 12 is overwhelming in favour of 12 being the fundamental text, upon which 19 embroiders its own improved and expanded version. The composer of 19 had 12 before him as a pre-existing text, which he remodels and reshapes using its old materials. The above study convergently confirms that 12+19, 17 is not only the older prototype of 19, 1-16, but that it is *ipso facto* archetypal, precisely because 19, 1-16 is firmly anchored in the Archetype through the solid testimony of all the manuscripts. That testimony makes the archetypal genuineness of 12+19, 17 to be as secure implicitly as that of 19, 1-16 is explicitly secure. 19, 17 is evidently accepted as archetypal. And all this means that any scholars who, like F. Belloni Filippi\* dismiss 12 have missed the point owing to the lack of a painstaking detailed consideration of the passages involved.

(2) The above comparison of the two descriptions elucidates another point of great importance based on the high-kāvya stanzas 19, 16 and 19, 17 (in 13-syllable metre 'praharṣiṇī'). 19, 17 is given in the NE-versions at the end of 12, corresponding to 19, 16 being at the end of 19. 19, 17 is also preserved by the entire S, as against the NW(k). These two end-tags 19, 16 and 19, 17 stand exactly in the same relation to each other as do the two descriptions mutually on a larger scale. 'gaṃbhīram' and 'aṃbaraprakāśam' are common to both. It is hard to believe that one can put up with such repe-

\* F. Belloni Filippi thinks that the second description (in 12) is a cheap and slavish imitation of the first one (in 19) so that the character of its being a later interpolation is evident to every one. *op. cit.*



titions in two consecutive stanzas unless they were originally separate. Thus, 19, 16 and 19, 17, point to the two descriptions, 19 and 12 respectively, to which they are attached as their conclusions. We get two combinations: 19+19, 16 and 12+19, 17. Their divergent syntactical constructions attach each one to different preceding texts; 19, 16 with 'dadṛśatuḥ' attaches itself to 'jagmatuḥ draṣṭum' in 19, 2 while 19, 17 with 'ity evaṃ paśyantyau abhipetatūḥ' (or better 'abhi-jagmatuḥ') attaches itself to the 'jagmatuḥ āloka-yantyau' in 12, 1-1. This organic relationship of each of the two final stanzas to each of the descriptions is significant, because the presence of 19, 17 *ipso facto* implies an original description corresponding to it. More importantly, it means that 19, 17 (which is archetypal) presupposes and proves the archetypal existence of 12 also, of which it is the remnant. 'vibhāvitaikadeśena avibhāvitam akhīlam anumūyate'† (From a seen part, the un-seen whole is inferred. And this proves that the S-recension derived 19, 17 from the archetypal text that contained its correlative 12. Hence 12 (which S excises) is *ipso facto* archetypally genuine. This is a very precious result of the above scrutiny. Therefore, the admittance of 19, 17 ought to oblige us to admit 12 also into the Critical Text.

(3) We can still adduce another telling proof for 12 being originally archetypal. An attentive study 1.6 of 13 shows that it is, organically speaking, a misfit, because it is not compatible with 1.5 of 13

There are two positions of 13 given by the manuscripts. Some put it before 20, 1, some before 12. Let us examine both:

- (a) 1.6 of 13—*etasmin antare te tu sapatnyau paṇite tadā*  
1.1 of 20—*taṃ samudram atikramya kadrūr vinatayā saha*
- (b) 1.6 of 13—*etasmin antare te tu sapatnyau paṇite tadā*  
1.1 of 12—*tatas te paṇitam kṛtvā bhaginyau dvijasattama.*

As it is evident from both these sets, 1.6 of 13 does not at all go with any of the texts, and stands disjointed and loose. However, its comparison with 1.1 of 12 makes it evident that it is unintelligible except as an alternative-substitute of 1.1 of 12. It resembles 1.1 of 12 in being welded with 1.2 of 12. (as in the case of 11ab and 285, 1 in *adhy.18*). Thus, 1.1 of 13 in fact beautifully coheres syntactically with 1.2 of 12.

1.6 of 13—*etasmin antare te tu sapatnyau paṇite tadā*

1.2 of 12—*jagmatuḥ paramaprīte paraṃ pāraṃ mahodadheḥ*

(Why the redactor has sought to substitute the original 1.1 of 12 by his own 1.6 of 13, we shall see in due course.) It is clear that

† Adapted from the Vikramorvaśyam, IV.17.



1.6 of 13 is a substitute of 1.1 of 12, but fortunately, both (1.6 of 13 and 1.1 of 12, the substitute and the substituted) come down to us due to copyistic indiscrimination. Hence 13 presupposes 12. And since there are so many and good reasons to consider 13 as archetypal, the present argument becomes a corroborative proof of the archetypal authenticity of 12. It is not possible that any versional redactor could keep those tell-tale consecutive lines together (much less that he should add either, if one of them was already present), unless they were traditionally there. And they could only be there together as mutually exclusive alternatives.

All these converging positive arguments lead to the conclusion that 12, jettisoned by Sukthankar, belongs to the Archetype. The non-attestation of 12 in K (and S which is represented by K<sub>1</sub>) is no proof of its adventitiousness, since its genuineness can be vindicated on reasonable grounds based on the manuscriptal data and their logical implications. As in the case of 13, all that is imperative is that we should be able to furnish the reasons which could have impelled the omitting sub-redactors to expunge the archetypal 12. In that we are particularly fortunate, because the contents of the passage in that context are such that excision must be considered much more psychologically possible than the addition of such repetitious matter in such measure and manner. About this negative aspect, later on.

Thus, the archetypal existence of 13 and 12 (19 offers no problem) being established, we may safely proceed to ascertain their relative position and connection in the archetypal text. We are faced with two neighbouring twin-texts 19 and 12, and 13 and 12. They are thus considered in two combinations:

I	II
19	13
12	12

The consideration of I involves a fundamental point: how the two repetitious-similar descriptions, 19 and 12 have come to be juxtaposed. Examining them, we found that 12 is older and more primitive, and 19 is younger and secondary (as a redacotorial improvement on the former), though both are equally archetypal. Not satisfied with the simpler and less detailed old description, the sophisticated archetypal redactor fashions his own more refined and ornate 19; but out of respect for the old received materials, he keeps what pre-archetypal tradition gives him and adds his own improved-amplified version of the same. It seems clear that the redactor in question is out to preserve and utilize the traditional matter. In order



to do that, he employs here a device somewhat similar to the editorial device of the double '*vistara-saṃkṣepa*' forms of the passage (19 and 12 respectively), a trick of the redactorial trade. The Mahābhārata redactor has an epigonal attitude, whose motto is 'the more the merrier'. He accumulates as much mythological and traditional matter as he can lay his hands on. He will not only modify and adopt freely, but elaborate even at the expense of '*punarukti*' as long as he can find a hook to hang the thing on. The reason why the archetypal redactor was especially keen on keeping the double ocean-description here does not seem to be far to seek. The Mahābhārata is a land-locked epic, and a direct description of the ocean is a very rare occurrence; while on the other hand the Rāmāyaṇa would offer many chances for it. Hence the Mahābhārata redactor would naturally be unwilling to miss such a heaven-sent opportunity to display his skill and to regale his audience. Thus it seems that the oldest description (12 + 19, 17) descends to the archetypal redactor from the ancient, original Suparṇakhyāna tale, which was incorporated into the Mahābhārata. He took the step of preserving the traditional passage and at the same time of improving it by newly composing his own 19 and inserting it first, with the intention of making the two descriptions follow one another as panoramic pre-view and actual rapid transit re-view of the oceanic wonders.

Further, a careful scrutiny of the two *sargabandha*-ends (19, 16 and 19, 17) will reveal the deft craft of our redactor; 19, 16 contains '*dadṛśatuḥ*' and 19, 17 (attached to 12) contains '*paśyantyaḥ abhipetatuh*' (or better '*abhi jagmatuh*').

## 19

3a, 15d: *dadṛśāte*16c: *dadṛśatuḥ*

## 12

1. 2, 4: *jagmatuh ālokayantyaḥ*19, 17d: *paśyantyaḥ abhi jagmatuh*

This phraseology, though apparently identical is not without differences. The arrangement of the words is very significant; it could not but be the result of an intentional design. It is how the redactor salves his conscience by showing that the two similar descriptions are not pointlessly repetitious, and that they can bear to be close together. The nature of the two verbs automatically decides for us the order of their placement. It is 19 and 12, which is precisely the order given by all the manuscripts. The first description (19) comes as a full-bloomed pre-view of the ocean, and the second one (12) becomes a sort of a quasi-summarising re-view in flight while actually crossing the ocean. This explains the reversal of the usual procedure of first '*saṃkṣepa*' and then '*vistara*'. Psychologically it is natural that the redactor would give precedence to



his complete and improved version (19) either because it was his own and better, or because it seems more natural to him that the longer and more leisurely of the two descriptions should be given in connection with the sisters' pre-flight panoramic contemplation while still on land, and the shorter one in connection with the actual swift crossing of the ocean. It may be noted that in *adhy.* 20, 1, we have the word '*śighragā*', which could have actuated and aided the redactor to put the shorter 12 immediately before *adhy.* 20, in order to produce a vivid psychological-dramatic sense of rapid speed. Also 19, 17d attached to 12 has '*drutam*'.

The repetition of the idea of the bet in 1.3 of 19 and 1.1 of 12 is due to the fact that 12 is older and is sought to be preserved by the author of 19 out of respect for the traditional matter. He preserves 12 as it is, in its entirety, with all its old features, even at the expense of repetitiousness. But it can be said that he did not feel called upon to change the old text because the '*paṇitam kṛtvā*' in 12 looked sufficiently like a reference back to his own '*dāsye kṛtapāṇe*' in 19, 3, which being separated by 19 needed a linking allusion.

The above points are not inventions of our own but are based on indications within the text itself. Actually we only endeavour to conjecture what could have possibly been at work in the mind of the archetypal redactor and motivated him to do what we see him doing i.e. putting these two analogous descriptions side by side and in that peculiar order. Our task is to be pragmatic and to account for the facts within the text. We can see that the arguments advanced above may not have, if taken singly, an absolutely convincing force; yet when taken cumulatively and with the logical support for 12, and the redactorial I.Q. consisting in the general conserving trend, they acquire a strength that yields a sufficiently reasonable basis for building such a hypothesis as the one that can logically and satisfactorily explain the manuscriptal data.

With regard to II, i.e. the order of 13 and 12, it has already been shown before that 1.6 of 13 is a substitute of 1.1 of 12, which establishes the priority of 13. Thus the order is 13 and 12. Though the textual order is 13 and 12, 12 is older than 13, just as it is older than even 19, though the latter is called the first ocean-description, because of its relative position in the text. Hence, 19 being given before 12 in all manuscripts, the consolidated order of all these texts is:

- 19 (first ocean-description)
- 13 (serpents' council)
- 12 (second ocean-description)
- 20 (arrival at the other shore)



This is the order actually documented by one group of manuscripts, viz. DnD<sub>1-4</sub>. Let us add another argument in favour of this order. 'taṁ samudram' in *adhy.* 20, 1 also clearly indicates the immediately preceding ocean-description. Therefore 13 could not be immediately before *adhy.* 20, because its contents are different and because the above-mentioned 1.6 would then be left hanging in the air.

*Question of 5-lined 13:—*

Now a new problem arises. 13 loses its inorganic 1.6 as not belonging to the rest of 13 and as substituting 1.1 of 12. Hence 13 remains only with 5 lines, i.e. only with two *ślokas*, one of which would be a six-pāda anomaly. And in this context we find no other six-pāda anomaly. The one presented by the Critical Edition in 18, 11 having the semblance of one single *śloka* was in fact spurious, which by a proper interpretation of manuscriptal evidence was shown to be due to a 'secunda manu' redactor (LAR) substituting the original line, and then to a blind copying of both the substitute and the substituted. As a general rule, we would consider that if there are such *ślokas* in the parent Archetype, it is more likely that they come from the retouching hand of the LAR than from the composing FAR himself who carefully preserves the normal type of *śloka*-build in this context.

Now it so happens that 13 has one line which is suspect. It is 1.3 where the snakes express the hope that, if they comply with their mother's wish, she may free them from the curse. This is the only reference, as we know, to such an idea. As fully discussed in Chapter IV the point of revocation and mitigation of the curse by Kadrū is quite irrelevant to the entire story of the Āstika-parvan. Actually that element runs counter to and thwarts the central tale of Āstika. It would be most unpsychological from the folkloric point of view for an author purposely to introduce an element of expectation in such a prominent way, and then not only forget about it completely (not even saying why it was not fulfilled), but contradict it in the further course of the story, as if nothing had ever been said about revocation at all. The snakes were fated to perish in the far-off future which the author repeatedly expresses, and the only escape is through Āstika, as decreed through the intervention of Prajāpati Himself, and without any reference to Kadrū. Hence Kadrū's relenting could not have been contemplated by the original author, because it would not mean anything in fact. This argument is confirmed by the fact that 13 makes perfectly good sense without 1.3. Add to this the fact that 1.3 contains the word 'bhāminī' used for the mother (Kadrū) by her sons! This is surely befitting a secondary redactor, and not the composer. Hence



the line containing the idea of revocation of the curse cannot be psychologically ascribed to the archetypal author. This agrees with the fact that the six-pāda śloka is more likely to come from a modifying redactor than from an original redactor. Hence it can be said that the 'secunda manu' LAR, in composing his 1.3, incurs a six-pāda śloka. He seems rather misled by the fact that his remodelled 13 (with lines 3 and 6) made up 3 formally complete śloka-units. He overlooks the fact that he had meant 1.6 (the substitute of 1.1 of 12) to form a śloka with 1.2 of 12, as we have already seen. This is not a mere surmise, since the manuscripts which keep 13 but drop 12, or which transfer 13 to the end of 12, all keep that 1.6 for the same reason (that it makes a complete śloka), although it makes no sense except as connected with 1.2 of 12.

If it were asked whether it is not possible that the FAR himself (who introduced the curse) may have made 1.3 and made a six-pāda śloka, the answer is that, if it were only a question of a mere six-pāda anomaly, this possibility could not be absolutely excluded; but that, if the reason adduced is duly considered, then the balance of probability points clearly to the above solution especially in this whole context, where the LAR's activities are so apparent.

In sum, lines 1+2, 4+5 belong to the FAR and lines 3 and 6 (as suppressing 1.1 of 12) belong to the LAR.

#### Question of 1.2 of 13:—

Now we take one more step. It is in respect of 1.2 of 13, which reads: 'niḥsnehā vai dāhen mātā asamprāptamanorathā'. The variant 'dahet' is represented by a majority of manuscripts in spite of its fitting less well for two reasons: (a) 'dahet' has no object unless it is borrowed from 1.3 which by now we have found to be the 'secunda manu' LAR's. (b) And even then, how would Kadrū 'burn' the snakes? She has already delivered her curse for her sons to be burnt in the Janamejaya sacrifice. Thus the word 'dahet' is ill-fitting in the context.

The only word that could have originally occupied the place of 'dahet' would be 'bhavet' (which is actually given by one manuscript, D<sub>5</sub>). This 'bhavet' is demanded by the abovementioned stylistic and contextual inappropriateness of 'dahet'. It is quite possible that 13, 1+2, 4+5 originally came from the pre-epic author of the Ākhyāna, describing the deliberations of the sons in response to their mother's order. In that case it cannot be denied that 'bhavet' must have been there. And the FAR could have kept it unchanged even after his introduction of the element of first refusal of the serpents which invited Kadrū's curse. He may have



derived from it a sufficiently plausible reason for the serpent's change of mind and the decision to obey. 'bhavet' would mean that the snakes desire that their mother in the intervening long time (before the fulfilment of the curse is due) may not be without affection with her anger unappeased in their daily life at home. The FAR was relying on the natural psychology that a mother punishing even severely her disobedient children is not 'niḥsnehā'—though she may become so if there is obdurate stubbornness on their part.

Now in the view of the LAR's interference witnessed in the case of 1.6 and 1.3 of 13, it would be logically more plausible to consider the LAR to have changed the original FAR-preserved 'bhavet' into 'dahet'. He has intended to give extra prominence to the curse, which he does by inserting his 1.3. The idea of the FAR in keeping 'bhavet' is lost sight of by him. And in view of his 1.3 ('*prasannā mokṣayet asmān tasmāc chāpāt ca bhāminī*'), he changes 'bhavet' into 'dahet' in order to bring out the contrast with his 'mokṣayet' in 1.3. Hence it is that all the manuscripts read the text as the LAR left it. As regards this point of 'bhavet' vs. 'dahet', it should be remarked that our solution might not seem absolutely definitively to exclude the possibility of there being 'dahet' in the FAR's text. But in view of all the arguments adduced above, (q.v. especially those against 1.3 being in the FAR's text), it becomes a practical necessity to adopt 'bhavet' in the FAR's text, and to regard 'dahet' and 1.3 as introduced by the LAR. We stand by this conclusion even if our over-all solution of the problem of 13 does not depend on this point for its validity, though it derives strong convergent confirmation from the above conclusion.

The whole point is that the intended peculiar reconstruction of the original simple tale has imposed on the archetypal redactors (the FAR and the LAR) the necessity of accommodating so many of their own novel features into the ancient original Suparṇa-legend that they are bound to create further redactorial reactions.

#### *Original Position of 13:—*

Now 13 occurs in the midst of the two ocean-descriptions, which is not the natural position where the archetypal author of the tale, the FAR, would logically from the story-teller's point of view, place it. The proper place for it can only be immediately after adhy. 18 in the FAR's text. This original placement of 13 according to the FAR is demanded by the reasons of the narrative itself. They are: (1) 13 contains the natural reaction of the snakes to their mother's fatal curse, which is implied in it. Hence it fits from the point of a folklorically natural narrative style, contents and continuity. (2) 13 provides the temporal element of the story,



since thus alone the snakes get the sufficient time-interval to reach their destination in the course of the intervening night and before the two speeding sisters. (3) We can add the indirect confirmation of S, which also places its Karkoṭaka-episode precisely after adhy. 18 and before 19. (4) This is the most important point. A question may arise in view of the psychological factor of Kadrū's foreknowledge of her sons' compliance. How does 13 provide this element? This can be answered by saying that 13 also serves the same purpose at least implicitly and indirectly, because it would be unnatural to think that Kadrū doesn't know at all of the immediate conference of her aggrieved sons. It all happens in the same house and under Kadrū's very nose, so to say, because Kadrū had repaired home to give the fateful order to her 1000 sons (cf. 18, 5 ff). Hence there is no need for any explicit notification (which 286\* does give) on the serpents' part, who deliberate virtually in their mother's presence and decide with loud acclamation to obey.

The above reasons show that 13 (1+2, 4+5) must have been placed immediately after adhy. 18 by the FAR. After 13, the FAR's text immediately continued with the two ocean-descriptions (19 and 12) in uninterrupted succession. This uninterrupted succession is not inadmissible in the FAR, because as we said, he makes a clear distinction between the two by the key-words '*dadṛśatuh*' and '*jagmatuh*' as representing pre-view and re-view.

#### *Transfer of 13:—*

It was this very contiguity of the two repetitious descriptions that tempted the LAR to displace 13 from its original position after adhy. 18, to the new position between the two ocean-descriptions, i.e. 19, 13, 12. This displacement was done with the unmistakable intention of making 13 serve as a sort of a relieving interlude that could break to some extent the impression of a monotonous repetition in the twin-parallel texts. But in so doing, he could not possibly leave 13 and 12 untouched. He obviously did not intend to bracket off the ocean-description in 12, because, as discussed above 1.1 of 12 is supplanted by his 1.6 of 13, which is thus connected with 1.2 of 12. The reason is: 13 is placed after 19 as if the LAR wanted to introduce a suspense-element (though unnaturally) by bringing in the snakes' resolve in the nick of time when their mother is on the verge of crossing the ocean. 13 is followed by 12, in which the actual crossing takes place. Add to this his desire to break the monotony of the two descriptions as said above. Hence he transposed 13 and, as a consequence, he changed 1.1 of 12, '*tatas te paṇitam kṛtvā bhaginyau dviṣasattama*' into his own 1.6 of 13, '*etasmin antare te tu sapatnyau paṇite tadā*'. This is connected with 1.2 of 12 '*jagmatuh paramaprīte param pāraṃ mahodadheḥ*'. The phrase '*etas-*



*min antare*' is significantly employed by the LAR. It means, 'in the meantime' or more generally 'on that occasion, at that time'. This is obviously more appropriate to the context than '*tataḥ paṇītaṁ kṛtvā*'. It means: The snakes met and decided to go, and they actually went and stuck to the horse's tail. In the meantime (at that time), Kadrū and Vinatā went to the other shore of the ocean. '*tataḥ*' in 12, 1 is 'then' or 'afterwards', which seems to mean that Kadrū and Vinatā betted and went ('*paṇītaṁ kṛtvā*') immediately after the snakes had gone, which is not really the case. That is obviously the reason why the LAR changes '*paṇītaṁ kṛtvā*' into his '*saptṇyau paṇīte tadā*', which avoids that possible misunderstanding by making the back-reference to the bet through an epithet of the sisters '*paṇīte*', meaning "the rivals who had wagered".

But in doing all this, the LAR overlooks (and quite naturally, being a second-hand redactor and not the first author) the essential subtle psychological point of Kadrū's foreknowledge, and puts 13 at a place where Kadrū cannot have that foreknowledge of the serpents' decision, since she is already away from the house and on the shore of the ocean.

The end-result then is that all the manuscripts which attest 13 support (directly or indirectly, as we shall see) the order 18, 19, 13, 12. Whereas, as shown above, such an order was not the original, primary-archetypal one. The FAR must have had 18, 13, 19, 12—which the LAR turned into 18, 19, 13, 12, adding (obviously forced by that very change) the new linkage-line 13, 6 in order to smooth away the difficulty created by his new placing. Be it noted that the FAR's 13 is lines 1+2, 4+5, while the LAR's 13 is lines 1-6.

A consequence of this result is that all the arguments that show the archetypal nature of 13 confirm '*ipso facto*' the primary status (i.e. in the FAR's text) of 12, since 1.6 of 13 could be only a substitute of a pre-existing text (FAR's), made by the '*secunda manu*' LAR. On the other hand, all the arguments that prove 12 to have been in the FAR's archetypal text, prove '*ipso facto*' that 13 could not have originally included its 1.6. This indirectly indicates that 13 could not have been in its present position which is not its original place, because the very substitution of 12, 1 by 13, 6 by the LAR shows a desire on his part to solve the difficulty created by his own transference of 13 from before 19 to a new position after 19 and before 12.

#### Graphic Factor:—

Now we come to the final step of our scrutiny of 13. If the passage has to be transposed over a whole long *adhyāya* (19, 1-16),



it is natural to expect that the LAR would not find it easy to make the transfer by the use of a mere 'kākapāda', but would rather have to cancel the passage in its original emplacement (especially being so short—in fact only two ślokas 1+2, 4+5), and add it anew in the margin, between 19 and 12. This is done together with the putting of the substituting 1.6 of 13 marginally close to 1.1 of 12. Since no manuscript which omits 13 shows the copying of both the substitute (13, 6) and the substituted line 12, 1), we have to conclude that 1.6 of 13 was not written interlinearly, but marginally together with the other lines of the passage. This explanation is further confirmed by the fact that at the original place of 13 (immediately after *adhy.* 18), the LAR had added the whole 285 with a confusing abundance of 'kākapādas' as shown above. Hence he would naturally have to avoid further confusion in the way suggested here, by cancelling and transferring this short passage.

This graphic factor must be visualised since the redactor had to operate upon the written texts. This explanation makes it a practicable way for the LAR to do what he intends to do.

Thus, this whole problem of 13 and 12 compels us to posit two clearly different and demarkable redactorial stages within the Archetype (as witnessed in the problem of 285 in the previous chapter). In the present case also, this assumption of a twofold layer, (a 'secunda manu' redactorial agency within a 'prima manu' Archetype) becomes a logical necessity demanded by the manuscriptal facts, and is not a superfluity.

#### *The Question of 286\*:*—

It is in order to find out whether the archetypal (FAR's) text contained any other viable alternative solution to the above central riddle, that we should investigate 286. The state of affairs regarding the passage is this: It is rejected and consigned by Sukthankar to the Critical Apparatus 'below the line'. It is a passage of six lines describing the Karkoṭaka episode. It is solidly documented only by the whole S. The northern manuscripts K<sub>4</sub>D<sub>4</sub> (marg.), which are undoubtedly conflated, present a clear case of contamination, just as the Southern manuscripts G<sub>1.2.4.5</sub> do in the case of 13. There is no doubt that 286 belongs to the S-sub-archetype. Yet, since it is a one-recensional passage, Sukthankar has rightly dismissed it as an interpolation by the South. The passage aroused initially our interest because of a disagreement between Sukthankar and Winternitz who inclines to regard it as a genuine constituent of the original archetypal text.



It will therefore be useful to note Winternitz's contention in favour of this passage. Winternitz seems to have a greater faith in the trustworthiness of the Southern recension than in the Devanāgarī editions.

In an article\* entitled, 'On the South Indian Recension of the Mahābhārata', Winternitz observes, 'In the Suparṇākhyaṇa [or rather Suparṇādhyāya] which like other Vedic texts (Śata. Br. 111, 6, 2, 3 sqq. Taitt. Samh. VI, 1, 6, 1 sqq.) relates the story of the wager of Kadrū and Vinatā, no reference is made to the part played by the snakes in connection with this wager. Partly however the awkwardness of the story in the Mahābhārata is due merely to the state of the text in the Devanāgarī editions. The South-Indian recension gives a much more satisfactory text. That Adhyāya 22 [i.e. our 12 and 13] which is omitted in the South Indian recension also proves that—at any rate in this particular episode—that South Indian recension has preserved a better text than that found in the Devanāgarī editions. The South Indian Version continues: After the snakes had thus been cursed by Kadrū, Karkoṭaka, greatly distressed on account of that curse, propitiates his mother by promising to transform himself into black hair and make the horse's tail appear black. This is, at any rate, more plausible than the version found in the Devanāgarī editions. The latter tell us that all the snakes comply with Kadrū's wish, and yet the snakes perish at Janamejaya's sacrifice. While the South Indian recension makes only one Nāga (or perhaps one party of Nāgas) comply with the wishes of Kadrū, which agrees well with the fact that finally some of the snakes are spared from the general destruction at the snake-sacrifice.'

But, as fully discussed in connection with Oldenberg's similar view mentioned in Chapter IV, all arguments based on the non-revocation of Kadrū's curse and its partial fulfilment are absolutely irrelevant to the issue. The view of Winternitz is also similarly controverted by Sukthankar, 'If Karkoṭaka alone obeys, one may say why should some nāgas have been spared.' None should have been spared. If, however, we accept Winternitz's interpretation of one nāga in the sense of one party of nāgas, the discrepancy is solved because a party means some, and they are spared in the end owing to their compliance. In that case, Sukthankar's argument would not apply. But the question is how one nāga can be understood as one 'party'. Sukthankar, in opposition to Winternitz's opinion, rightly athetizes 286. It should be realised that Winternitz, like Oldenberg, completely misses the point in connecting the snakes' compliance with the mitigation of the curse, since the text explicitly

\* loc. cit.



and repeatedly shows that such a thing is due to another cause, namely Prajāpati's intervention and the efforts of the snakes to procure the birth of Āstika, as has been fully discussed in Chapter IV.

*Objections:—*

(1) In spite of the universality of disobedience and curse, the exceptionality in the case of Karkoṭaka is made without either bringing out the fact that this particular snake had not disobeyed first, or, at any rate, explicitly stating that he had repented for his disobedience. To judge by the impression that 286 gives, if normally understood, Karkoṭaka is presented as if he was not included in disobedience (and curse), whereas the preceding context in 18, 7 cd logically implies that he was included.

(2) In admitting 286 we assume that the author of the Archetype had committed an oddity in using 'vālaḥ' in the sense of 'tail' against the context-usage in *adhys.* 18 and 20, where the word is definitely understood in the sense of 'hair'. He uses the expression 'vālaḥ aṅjanaprabhaḥ' in a misleading manner. The meaning of 'tail' is generally accepted in classical dictionaries (like Amara-kośa), but it sounds odd, since it stands between two closely connected texts having the meaning of 'hair'.

(3) The impression of 286's being a second-hand product (because of its *prima facie* looking like a Southern interpolation) is strengthened by a serious inconsistency it incurs. The gap (disobedience and yet fulfilment) is supposed to be closed in the archetypal text by Karkoṭaka's offer. But in arguing for the necessity of 13, a strong, though indirect, justification based on internal and contextual evidence was advanced for it. There are many indications within the Ākhyāna which show that all the serpents had in guilty conspiracy participated in the fraudulent trick of their mother. It was thus their treachery that was responsible for the vengeance of Garuḍa against them. Thus the story-teller's explicit mention of the serpents' treachery proves their subsequent co-operation with the plot of their mother. This argument unmasks the new contradiction in the case of 286\*: one serpent does it, but all are supposed to have done it. It is not that many are punished for the misdeed of one that creates the difficulty. That sort of thing we see also in the Ruru-story and in the very Janamejaya-sacrifice (cum *Pauṣyaparvan*), where all snakes are doomed because of one Takṣaka. The point really is that the same author who so clearly indicates Takṣaka's guilt as the cause of the destruction of the serpents, here makes no reference to Karkoṭaka at all, but says that all had perpetrated the trick. We cannot accept that the author could speak in a generic way attributing to all



serpents what is done by one of them. On the other hand, it is certainly more plausible to think that the second-hand redactor (such as S) who composed 286\* anew for certain specific reasons of his own, can much more easily overlook or forget the remoter implications in the Ākhyāna in trying to solve the immediate problem. The Karkoṭaka-episode is not only against the context of the story, but is also ethically and folklorically incomprehensible, in that the author should represent the snakes as being for ever punished indiscriminately by Garuḍa for a trick that they have not only not played but have positively refused to play even at the cost of a horrible curse! Only a secondary redactor can commit this kind of anomaly.

### *The Sub-redactorial State*

The sub-redactorial state is quite complex, since it is beset with numerous fluctuations and deviations. It is owing to the peculiar elements of the story and the text that the redactorial activity becomes so lively here and gets into an excising mood. We have already witnessed this fact on a smaller scale in the case of 285\*. The various versional redactors react differently to the composite archetypal text received by them, demonstrating that there is also an element of excision in the redactorial transmission of the epic text. We shall take up the individual versions one by one and endeavour to examine their motives, which are not likely to be beyond a reasonable human-psychological comprehension. To enumerate the different textual vagaries shown by the different manuscripts:

<i>S</i>	18	286*	19(1-17)	—	—	20
<i>N</i>						
<i>K</i> <sub>1</sub> ( <i>S</i> <sub>1</sub> )	18	—	19 (1-16)	—	—	20
<i>K</i> (proper)	18	—	19 (1-16)	13	—	20
<i>NB</i>	18	—	19 (1-16)	—	12	20
<i>DaD</i> <sub>5-7</sub>	18	—	19 (1-16)	12	19,17 13	20
<i>DnD</i> <sub>1-4</sub>	18	—	19 (1-16)	13	12	20
<i>V</i> <sub>1</sub>	18	—	19 (1-16)	12	19,17 13 (marg.)	20

We shall deal with these texts seriatim:—

S:—First we shall deal with the point of S's excision of 13. 13 did not suit S. Why? The reasons are as follows:—

(1) 13 tells us of universal obedience. Hence S (as well as the other Northern droppers of 13) like Oldenberg, is not unnaturally perplexed by the so-called 'illogicality' that the curse is not revoked nor softened by Kadrū, and many snakes do perish despite their repentance and compliance though subsequent to the curse. In fact according to S after the description of the universal curse in



*adhy.* 18, it seems improper to bring in a passage where the hope for the revocation of the curse is explicitly expressed, and when nothing like that actually appears in the sequel. (2) As seen earlier, 13 was originally after 18, and was cancelled there by the LAR apparently to make room for 285\* (which S excises as being marginal). But 13 in its new position is marginal and looking suspiciously additional. Hence one expects that the S-redactor would treat it exactly as he treated the adjoining marginal passage (285\*) and for similar if not stronger redactorial reasons. (3) 13 by means of an apparently superfluous and trailing 1.6 is hooked up with 12. 12 is redactorially excised by the S-redactor because of its repetitiousness and superfluity after 19 and still more because of its manifestly less refined quality. 12 is thus expendable compared with 19, and so S drops the archetypal 12. How much more, then, the marginal passage (13) which is attached to it. But in ousting both, the S-redactor retains 19, 17, the *sargabandha*-end of 12, precisely because it is in high-*kāvya* style and in special metre, and because some other *adhyāyas* in this Ākhyāna (for instance, 26, 46, 47) show double *sargabanda*-end stanzas (though never repetitively, as here!). It is also because 19, 17 contains (in spite of its general 'punarukti'), the distinctive word 'abhipetatuh' or 'abhi jagmatuh', which completes the sense of the previous similar stanza. Hence we find 19, 16 and 19, 17 in such closeness.

Now we come to the point of S's intentional insertion of 286\*. S has stressed and underlined the universality of disobedience by correcting the LAR's '*nānvapadyanta ye vākyaṃ tān . . . . .*', into his explicit '*tad vākyaṃ nānvapadyanta . . . . .*' (as discussed in Chapter IV), and has done away with the original 13 for the above-mentioned reasons. In view of all this, S was logically and psychologically in duty bound to find some solution to that central riddle of disobedience vs. fulfilment of the command. Hence comes Karkoṭaka as the one exception of dutiful acquiescence as against his brothers' general disobedience. S thereby leaves all the serpents in their curse-provoking disobedience, when Karkoṭaka alone is the executor of Kadrū's order acting as a whole tail. S thus merely substitutes a single agent for a plurality of them. It is not implausible to suggest that S may have also wanted to stress the general righteousness of the serpents in refusing to play such a cunning trick. And the reason for it may have been the greater popularity of serpent-worship in the South\*. This general attitude to the nāgas is probably also at work in S refusing to make all serpents participate in the trickery. But this leads him to incur the anomaly pointed out above.

\* vide Renou-Filliozat, *L'Inde Classique*, I, 326.



Now, S puts his Karkoṭaka-passage 286\* (looking as if modelled on the Elāpatra-episode) after *adhy.* 18. He thereby introduces an explicit notification to Kadrū and her explicit approval. This is a redactorial improvement on the implicit state of things in 13.

In doing all this, be it noted that S acts in accordance with his redactorial attitude which is consistently manifested in this whole context: He changes 18, 7cd and excises the *LAR*'s 285\*. Here he substitutes 286\* for the original 13 and excises 12, but betraying his hand by preserving 19, 17 attached to 12, exactly as he had betrayed himself by preserving 18, 11ab while excising 285\*.

There is a point already indicated above that needs elucidation. The two texts—the one of Karkoṭaka venturing to go and to transform himself into a 'vāla', and the other parallel texts in *adhy.* 18 ('vālāḥ bhūtṛvā añjanaprabhāḥ') and in *adhy.* 20 ('bahūn vālān') seem mutually inconsistent. How does the South account for this discrepancy? The state of the text in S has to be pragmatically explained. We have only to find out what possibly could be in the mind of the S sub-redactor. It should be clear that S itself sees no contradiction between the text having singular and plural uses of the word 'vāla', in different senses of 'tail' and 'hair'. This is made credible by the fact that the versions of S are not at all anxious to change its text from singular into plural. Hence S's text can be explained reasonably only if we take S to have meant 'vāla' as 'tail' in 286\*.

Notwithstanding all this, S by introducing his 286\* perpetrates numerous incongruities (1-4) as pointed out above.

We shall now tackle the N-versions.

K (*proper*):—In regard to the other two controversial passages (12 and 13), the Northern testimony is thoroughly split.

Dealing first with the testimony of NW, i.e. K (-K<sub>1</sub>, which represents the Śāradā manuscript (Ś<sub>1</sub>) missing here), we find that the whole second ocean-description (12+19, 17) is eliminated. These manuscripts are very understandably streamlining. Their non-attestation of the passage is of no great significance, because in this context they are surgical. The reason is not far to seek. Their higher critical tendency would naturally not allow them to stomach tedious and expendable repetition in 12+19, 17. They would obviously go for the ocean-description in 19, which is first and besides more rhetorical and attractive. Sukthankar himself, in having accepted 19, 17 (and rightly) in the Critical Text, and therefore as archetypal, *ipso facto* brands the NW-versions as excisional. Hence our contention that there is also redactorial excision in the



Mahābhārata manuscript tradition is supported by the Critical Edition as well. Now if the NW could cut 19, 17, there are all the more cogent reasons to suppress the superfluous 12. Thus the absence of 12 in NW is the result of wilful redactorial excision.

There is a strong additional proof that the NW-versions (inclusive of  $\mathcal{S}_1$ , through  $K_1$ ) have excised 12. Under 19, 3 the Critical Edition records 288\*, which is added after 19, 3ab. The line (288\*) is: 'mahāntam udakāgādham kṣobhyamāṇam mahāsvanam'. This line clearly indicates an acquaintance with 12, since, in 1.5 of 12 the second *pāda* of the above line is found word by word. This surely means that the NW-versions had 12 in their source, but have excised it. Again, in keeping 13, K ( $-K_1$ ) once again stands exposed, as regards its eliminating trend, because the hanging 1.6 of 13 has no possible explanation except as a substitute of 1.1 of 12. Both these reasons cumulatively prove that the NW-recensional sub-redactor has seen 12 in the Archetype but that he has deliberately expunged it for editorial reasons.

But the K (proper) redactor keeps 13, which he rightly considers to be practically indispensable. It is precisely because 13 does away with the anomaly of refusal yet fulfilment. It is true that K (proper) does not absolutely need 13 to escape that contradiction since it has the partitive-sounding reading in 18, 7cd; but his shrewd redactorial instinct probably makes him feel that such cannot be the real intention of the author in view of the reiterated insistence on the universality of the curse. But even if the redactor in question understood it partitively, he would feel that such an important point could not possibly be dismissed in such an implicit manner, but needed an explicit account in keeping with the detailed narration of the rest of the story. This redactor however does not bother about the non-mitigation and partial fulfilment of the curse, since he is concerned only with the logic of the tale he is handling. 13 is put in K ( $-K_1$ ) after 'sūta (or sautiḥ) uvāca' of 20.1. This is because both 12 and 20 begin with such a tag; but since 12 is excised by K, and the *adhyāya* formed by 13+12 is thereby reduced to only six lines of 13, 13 is naturally incorporated into the following *adhy.* 20, by simply suppressing the identical (and now superfluous) tag before 20, 1. Hence it becomes misleading to say (cf. Critical Edition) that 13 is put after 'sūta (or sautiḥ) uvāca' of 20.1. Again, it is not only the wholesale excision of 12 (with even 19, 17) that caused K to overlook the hanging 1.6 of 13, but also the reason that it formally made up a complete *śloka* with 1.5 of 13. Hence it is kept.

$K_1$  (=S) however drops 13 also, which he finds in his NW-recensional sub-archetype. The motives for the excision of 13 are dealt



with in the next point. It is not surprising to find the more radical  $K_1$  ( $=\dot{S}$ ) excising more than even  $K$ . Since 13, 12+19, 17 form one compact unit, it is more likely that a radical redactor like  $K_1$  would drop everything because of the repetitiousness of 12+19, 17; while a less radical redactor ( $K$  proper) would try to salvage what is not offensively repetitive but rather somewhat useful, i.e. 13.

$\tilde{N}B$ :—Now we come to some of the NE-versions such as  $\tilde{N}B$ . They otherwise form part of the solid-stolid Centre-North (NE) recension, but in this peculiar context, they go their own way.

The two ocean-descriptions (19, 1-16 and 12+19, 17) come close together in the  $\tilde{N}_{1.2}$  manuscripts, since all of them omit 13, which separates them in the  $LAR$ 's archetypal text. This contiguity leads to the mutilation of 12 as is shown by the  $\tilde{N}$ -manuscripts. For instance,  $\tilde{N}_{1.2}$  keep 12+19, 17 but, editorially cut lines 1-6 of 12, surely in order to create a semblance of one continuous uninterrupted description. Like  $\tilde{N}_{1.2}$ ,  $\tilde{N}_3$  also tries to combine the two descriptions into one. The Critical Edition says under 19, 1, 'For 1a-2d,  $\tilde{N}_3$  substitutes the first three lines of the passage given in App. 1 (No. 12).' This clearly proves that  $\tilde{N}_3$  knows 12. Further, what is said in connection with  $K_1$  holds good in the case of  $\tilde{N}_3$  also.  $\tilde{N}_3$  also substitutes 288\* for 19, 3ab. The latter part of 288\* ('*kṣobhyamānaṃ mahāsvanam*'), is the same as l. 5b of 12. This again establishes that  $\tilde{N}_3$  had 12 in its sub-archetype but had excised it wilfully. It is to be noted that  $\tilde{N}_3$  shows a great amount of redactorial freedom in excising and transposing elements of 19 against all the other manuscripts, as is indicated in the Critical Edition under 19, 5, 7, 10, 15 and especially 19, 17, the *sargabandha*-end stanza, which even Sukthankar accepts as genuine, but which  $\tilde{N}_3$  excises like  $K$ .

'The oldest extant manuscript of the *Ādiparvan*', (older than even  $\tilde{N}_3$  which is the oldest dated manuscript) is a Nepālī manuscript discovered later after the Critical Edition was out. It shall be, therefore, called  $\tilde{N}_4$ . Now what is true of  $\tilde{N}_3$  is true of this manuscript also. The testimony of  $\tilde{N}_4$  is the same as that of  $\tilde{N}_3$ . Sukthankar noted, 'The first three lines of this passage (App. 1, No. 12 of sixteen lines) are substituted in our manuscript in place of 1, 19, 1-2. This substitution is common to  $\tilde{N}_3$  also! The passage is characteristic of all  $N$ -manuscripts except those of the Kāśmīrī version.' (p. 341) So, the argument does not change, and we are led to conclude that  $\tilde{N}_4$  has also editorially excised 12.

Thus, the  $\tilde{N}$ -manuscripts taken collectively show excision and substitution against the other NE-manuscripts. They annul each other's testimony, since  $\tilde{N}_{1.2}$  keep the main body of the description (12) but suppress its introduction (12, 1-6), while  $\tilde{N}_{3-4}$  suppress



the main body (yet preserving 288\* i.e. 1.5 of 12) and keep (but transfer!) 12, 1-3 as a substitute of 19, 1a-2d.

The logical explanation of all these handlings is that their versional sub-archetype ( $\tilde{N}$ ) contained the entire 12, which the different manuscript redactors excised, substituted and transferred against their own parent exemplar and against each other.

Before we pass on to the next problem, it is necessary to conclude from the above facts that the whole of  $\tilde{N}$ -version must have had 12 in its versional sub-archetype. Further, on the one hand,  $\tilde{N}$ , B, D and  $V_1$  are the independent witnesses of the existence of 12 in the NE-recensional sub-archetype; on the other hand, they show through  $\tilde{N}$  that the trend to excise in this particular, repetitious case is alive, as it is also in K. Hence we shall not be surprised if under similar circumstances other versions like B show excision. All this confirms the existence of redactorial excising trend in general.

Coming to the uniform omission of 13 by the whole  $\tilde{N}$  and B, we should be able to adduce plausible reasons why they excise. We can point out different psychological reasons, which could have impelled these versions to expunge such an important passage as 13. (1) The versional redactors could have felt that the snake-council presupposing universal refusal was superfluous owing to their partitive and non-inclusive understanding of the LAR's and their sub-archetype's '*nānvapadyanta ye vākyaṃ*'. They would say: 'When it is specifically said in the very beginning, that some obey (since only those are cursed who disobeyed), where is the point in saying that all subsequently met and decided to make the horse's tail black?' This is their reasoning, and quite reasonable too. According to them, there is no contradiction, because the command was fulfilled by some snakes. (2) Further, even from the viewpoint of the consequence of the curse, it is all right; some disobedient nāgas have been cursed and some not because they obeyed their mother. Now what happens at Janamejaya's snake-sacrifice is that some are destroyed and some saved. As for the universality of the curse implied and indicated in the further course of the story, they could have easily felt that it was only morally speaking universal, owing to the fact that most or many of them had disobeyed. This was made easier for those redactors who thought that the fulfilment was also partial. Thus, those redactors could have taken the whole affair about the curse and its mitigation from the point of view of the story-telling conventions. They emphasise the wider aspect of the whole tale and argue as was done by Oldenberg. They think from the standpoint of the



story of the serpents' condemnation to the sacrificial fire. If there is an universal consent as in 13, there ought to be universal redemption: Kadrū should have relented and withdrawn the curse. But she does not, and her curse is underlined by Prajāpati, and even executed by the destruction of many snakes in the sacrifice, in spite of their subsequent universal obedience in 13. It is quite understandable that the redactor should under the circumstances (obedience yet destruction) feel inclined to do away with the snake-council passage altogether. Kadrū does not show even an iota of clemency towards her penitent children. This is so unmotherly! Again, in the epic a curse is generally mitigated to some extent. (See the *Ḍuṇḍubha*-story in the *Ādiparvan* itself.) But here the mitigation comes not from Kadrū, but from Prajāpati in view of the snakes' righteousness and unrighteousness. This makes 13 appear to them very unfitting. Hence, the *ÑB* sub-redactors thought it wise to annul 13 as containing a violation of the epic logic. (3) Add to these reasons, that 13 also looked like a belated episode, since the sisters were already on their way. It also looked like a foreign body, since its l. 6 was tautologous and incompatible with 1.1 of 12 in the main text. It has been shown above that 13 must have been in the Archetype as part of the *LAR*'s modified and transferred text, and therefore as a marginal passage (like 285\*).

All these are plausible-possible reasons, and they could have provoked these *DB* versional sub-redactors to drop 13.

*DaD<sub>5-7</sub>V<sub>1</sub>*:—Now we come to the question of transposition of 12 and 13 in certain manuscripts like *DaD<sub>5-7</sub>V<sub>1</sub>* (marg.). These manuscripts retain 12. Yet they clearly fail to comprehend the idea of their predecessor-redactor. They think it wiser to place the two descriptions together, since they pertain to the same matter and are almost alike. Besides, the result of putting the two descriptions side by side is that 13 comes immediately before *adhy.* 20. This, it is true, brings together the cause-effect concatenation, viz. the snakes' agreeing to go to change the colour of the horse's tail, and the actual finding of the black tail by the sisters in the beginning of *adhy.* 20. But in doing that, the result is an uncouth juxtaposition of 1.6 of 13 and 1.1 of 20 which do not construe at all. 1.6 of 13 is left hanging in the air in conjunction with 20, 1, the original order of 1.6 of 13 and 1.2 of 12 being disturbed. Yet, for these manuscripts, it was only a question of change of order of a text, whose components were accepted. And since the close connection of some *K*-manuscripts with some *D*-manuscripts (especially *K<sub>3-6</sub>* vs. *D<sub>5</sub>* etc.) is noted by Sukthankar in his *Prolegomena*, it is reasonable to attribute the order (19, 12, 13) in *DnD<sub>5-7</sub>* to a subsequent contamination of those *D*-manuscripts with the *K* ones, who had eli-



minated 12 and so had 13 before 20, 1.

Since the text is thus either deliberately tampered with by these redactors or influenced by other sources, its claim to authenticity is forfeited.

It may be asked how those sources that keep 13, 6 in that position justified it to themselves. The answer is that 1.6 formed a complete *śloka* of four *pādas* with 1.5. The redactors would resort to the 'ūhya' trick of their trade by taking it to mean that the sisters had wagered. They understand 'etasmin antare te tu bhaginyau paṇite (astām) tadā', just as one would understand, 'sa gatas tadā' as equivalent to 'sa gata (āsīt) tadā'. Thus they would get over the difficulty once the text was there.

And finally, the fact that V<sub>1</sub> keeps 13 as marginal is clearly due to later contamination.

With this we have completed the task of explaining how and why the different redactors acted as they did with reference to the complicated but closely connected problems of 19, 13, 12 and 286\*. The Archetype being in a perplexing state, the whole textual situation here is full of redactorial activities, both interpolational and excisional, at all levels.

To sum up the consolidated result of all the three successive problems 18, 7cd (Chapter IV), 285\* (Chapter V), and *adhy.* 19, App. 1.13, App. 1.12, 286\* (Chapter VI):

(1) The Archetype (FAR's) contained a consistent story with universally-meant 18, 7cd (in the N-reading, as *emendated*), and 18, 11cdef (without 11ab and 285\*), with 13, 1 + 2 (with 'bhavet'), 4+5 (general belated obedience and without reference to the curse in 1.3), followed by 19, 1-16 (ocean pre-view) and 12+19, 17 (ocean re-view).

(2) The LAR changed the above into 18, 7cd (as in the present N-reading) plus a marginal 285\* hooked up with his 11ab which substituted the original 18, 11cd, plus a cancelled 13 (with 1+2, 4+5); plus ocean-view (19, 1-16), plus a transferred and so marginal 13, 1.6 (increased by lines 3 and 6, with 'dahet' in 1.2, and 1.6 substituting 1.1 of 12), plus 12+19, 17.

(3) S's text involves an editorial change of the LAR's archetypal text 18, 7cd to contain clearer universality; plus excision of marginal 285\* yet keeping its 11ab betraying the excision; plus omission of cancelled 13 (1+2, 4+5); plus substitution of his 286\* (Karkoṭaka); plus 19, 1-16; plus excision of LAR's marginal 13, 1-6, together with the entire 12, but preservation of 19, 17 betraying



the excision of 12.

(4) N copies and preserves the *LAR*'s archetypal text, except that it omits the *LAR*-cancelled 13, 1+2, 4+5 (in its original place after *adhy.* 18), since he takes the *LAR*'s own inflated 13 between 19 and 12.

An important fact of practical text-critical value has emerged from the above study. The problem has again palpably shown that the manuscripts do keep the substitute and the substituted lines due to blind copying, and by ignoring the signs of bracketting or omission; and that they also transpose passages out of 'dynamic' redactional motives. These things are, therefore, not methodological hypotheses, but actual facts to be taken into account.

The following is a schematic presentation of transmission from the original archetypal text to the recensional stage:

<i>FAR</i>	<i>LAR</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>
adhy-18, 1—7cd (no 'ye-tān')	18, 1—7cd ('ye-tān')	= <i>LAR</i> 's	18, 7 cd (only 'tān')
18, 8—10	18, 8—10	= <i>LAR</i> 's	= <i>LAR</i> 's
	285, 1 (marg.)	= <i>LAR</i> 's	
	18, 11ab (interl.)	= <i>LAR</i> 's	= <i>LAR</i> 's
18, 11cd	(18, 11cd)	= <i>FAR</i> 's	= <i>FAR</i> 's
	285, 2—9 (marg.)	= <i>LAR</i> 's	
	285, 10 (marg.)	= <i>LAR</i> 's	
18, 11ef	= 18, 11ef	= <i>LAR</i> 's	= <i>LAR</i> 's
App. 1.13 (1+2, 4+5)	(App. 1.13, 1+2 4+5 cancelled)	= (cance- -lled)	= 286*
Adhy. 19, 1—16	= 19, 1—16	= <i>LAR</i> 's	= <i>LAR</i> 's
	App. 1.13, 1—6 (marg.)	<i>LAR</i> 's	
App. 1.12	= App. 1.12	= <i>LAR</i> 's	
Adhy. 19, 17	= 19, 17	= <i>LAR</i> 's	= <i>LAR</i> 's
Adhy. 20	= Adhy. 20	= <i>LAR</i> 's	= <i>LAR</i> 's

This final clarification brings us to the conclusion-solution of the entire problem in a reasonably satisfactory manner. It may not be having full definitiveness in this or that isolated detail, yet the solution taken as a whole does gain an amount of strength and per-



suasiveness, since all the points cumulatively and convergently indicate the necessity of the conclusion arrived at. It illustrates the fact that mere documentary testimony is not always reliable and sometimes proves misleading. Actually we have seen that those manuscripts who were seemingly singing out of tune were really singing the right tune.

The problem and its solution have important consequences for the redactorial trends in the Mahābhārata text tradition. They confirm *pari passu* the chief points of our revised canons of Mahābhārata Text-Criticism laid down in Chapter II. The global results are summarized in the following chapter.



## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY

#### A. *Text-Critical Method:*

The foregoing practical text-criticism was executed in actual application of our different theoretical views to the text-critical problems in the Ākhyāna. We shall herein attempt to elucidate the method involved in dealing with the above problems.

The essential point is that the text-critical investigator considers all the aspects of the problems and visualizes possibility after possibility and test one solution after another so as to exhaust reasonably the sphere of possible alternatives. The method is akin to that of the Śāstric dialectics, where the different views are lucidly presented so as to elicit a final answer. In the beginning, the hypotheses that occur to our minds in function of certain prominent factors, may seem to call for solutions that are rather far-fetched and complicated, but through intensive investigation, the critic is at last able to hit upon a solution which is at once simple and convincing, in which all the details of the data converge and all loose threads tie together. One covetable gain of this labour is that the final solution stands reasonably reinforced.

Text-criticism is a science of 'Genetic Interpretation'. The final conclusions when arrived at ought to be capable of offering a retrospective logical account of the entire complicated state of textual details. The attainment of such viable solutions alone becomes the acid-test of the validity and veracity of the text-critical principles and their consistent application. It is really a satisfaction to see that the final conclusions are in consonance with all the textual and manuscriptal factors and also with what is appropriate according to the criteria of language, sense, context, syntax, style and redactional-psychological characteristics.

Besides, one must be constantly aware of the basal fact that here one is facing an empirical science, which demands a pragmatic approach to the realities of the text. One has to proceed strictly logically and consequentially on the basis of the manuscriptal data involved. There is no pre-conceived value of the manuscripts, nor any pre-established rule of operation, except the implicit logic of all the textual factors. It is true that a few easily applicable rules can certainly help to get quick results; but, they sometimes prove to be only quicksands! It is only by an intensive study of



the text itself that we can formulate some guiding general rules to work with. They are ever ready to change, if facts clamour against them. It is this resilient attitude that can save this science from stagnating.

We may not, at times, be able to explain fully satisfactorily *how* exactly from the original text in the Archetype the manuscriptal data derive. Yet we try to trace the facts to their causal possibilities. '*a facto ad posse valet illatio*'. The 'that' cannot be denied just because the 'how' cannot be explained with certainty. The fact facing us is the beginning of all certainty. It has taken place *somehow*, because it is actually there. (Refer, for instance, to 285\* in this connection.)

This science cannot in its very nature go beyond suggesting what is in the end only probable, even if it is highly convincing. To expect anything like a mathematical certitude for every solution offered is in vain, when we are removed from the original reciters and redactors by centuries. We are left at times with a sort of precarious struggle of probabilities, and often have to argue from possible to plausible, and from plausible to probable, and that's all. We can at times only achieve an accumulation and convergence of many little probabilities which suffice to consolidate a reasonable result. Sometimes the conflict of various hypotheses is delicately balanced and defies a fully apodictic solution. Not all cases discussed here are equally definitive; but the main points, together with a good many of the minor ones, can — we trust — stand the test of impartial scientific scrutiny, because the conclusions concerning them have been arrived at with an endeavour to be guided only by a pragmatic approach based on the available manuscriptal facts and their logical implications.

It is in fact the building up of textual cases revealing a uniform redactorial rationale that brings about a confirmation of the principles propounded. The cases do not remain solitary or isolated, but possess a cumulative strength as coming in the same stream of redactorial behaviour.

#### B. *Text-Critical Principles:*

This recapitulation gains strength because the theoretical principles of Mahābhārata Text-Criticism, as reformulated in Chapter II, are demonstrated by a detailed scrutiny and solution of the concrete textual cases in the previous chapters. There are actually four cardinal points of our study, embracing both theoretical and methodological aspects. We present them as follows:—

- (1) There did exist one single common written source, the



Archetype, from which all the manuscripts have *directly* sprung and to which they can be re-traced. In this, the Mahābhārata Text-Criticism has a common basis to stand upon with Western Classical Philology. Despite this conformity, the fact remains that the Mahābhārata problem is without an exact parallel elsewhere in the world. The problem is veritably '*sui generis*' owing to the pre-eminently heterogeneous and multilateral character of the redactorial dynamism of the Mahābhārata transmitters operating freely on the basic archetypal text.

In conformity with the maxim, '*entia non sunt multiplicanda sine necessitate*', the Archetype must have had two text-critically distinct and demarcable redactorial strata, that of the First Archetypal Redactor (*FAR*), the 'incorporator', as distinguished from that of the Last Archetypal Redactor, (*LAR*), the 'improver'. This shows that the Archetype was a 'conglomerate-composite' text-product. The parent from which our manuscripts are directly derived is the *LAR*'s text, which it is our text-critical aim to reconstruct. But behind it and beyond it, we can at times clearly discern and prove the existence of the underlying *FAR*'s text, which is the real parent Archetype. That leads us one step further towards the Ur-Mahābhārata. However, we can not excise from our reconstruction the texts that belong to the '*secunda manu*' *LAR*, which were an integral part of our Archetype and which formed the direct basis of our manuscripts. The only thing we can reasonably do is to distinguish them, whenever feasible, by different types of print.

(2) The Mahābhārata text transmission reveals a tendency towards expunction also, although not so predominantly as towards expansion. Sukthankar's statement, 'Omission is as much a fact in the Mahābhārata textual tradition as addition.' (p. 121) has proved to be significant and of far-reaching importance even beyond his anticipation or actual practice. No doubt a shorter text is attractive. Yet in fact it sometimes turns out to be deceptive, since the silence of the manuscripts could be the result of the redactorial athetization of the genuine, (*FAR*'s or *LAR*'s) actually pre-existent matter. The 'simple' character could have been brought about by conscious and deliberate redaction and a 'higher-critical' process. And so, for modern text-critical scholarship, such a '*Textus Simplicior*' is not necessarily and infallibly always the '*Textus Purior*'. It shows itself as not only '*brevior*' but also—or at times at least—'*abbreviatus*'. At times it may be the '*Textus Ornator*' that is truer, although on the whole the opposite may be true. All that is essential to note is that we cannot go by any rule of thumb. It would be a misleading generalization to say that the Mahābhārata redactors never, never,



excise. The statement needs to be duly qualified, because the principle of omission is active in the Mahābhārata manuscript tradition to a certain extent. The two currents of interpolation and excision are mixed in different degrees. Therefore it is as faulty to go with the pre-conceived idea that the shortest text is the oldest as to proceed on the assumption that the longest is the oldest. In our anxiety to restore the '*Textus Simplicior*' we may incur inexplicable situations and truncated curtailments of the archetypal '*Texus Ornator*'. The rather haphazard and multi-agential way in which so many heterogeneous elements were introduced into the Mahābhārata '*omnium gatherum*' by not always skilful hands, makes it reasonable that the later more or less choosy redactors would try to streamline some of the excrescences. The parallel influence of the Rāmāyaṇa and its popularity and the development of more refined standards of literary taste may have worked considerably in that direction. This view is arrived at thorough an empirical, fact-finding attitude. The point is illuminating as it pinpoints our agreement *cum* disagreement with Sukthankar. Yet it must not be forgotten that Sukthankar left open the door for the standpoint taken here.

(3) It is text-critically more convenient and logical to classify the Mahābhārata manuscripts into three recensional categories instead of two. The classification is based on certain inherent and mutually distinct peculiarities possessed by these different recensions. The NE (North-East or Centre-North, ŃVBD) often forms a separate block from NW (North-West or Extreme-North, ŚK). The fact of their having individual traits is not affected by their common interpolational character in varying proportions. Their general characteristics can be broadly laid down as: The NE-stream of tradition is comparatively more conservative in the sense of its preservation of old passages, even if also adding new ones, and so can be said to give at times the '*Texus Ornator*'. To that extent it is nearer to the Archetype than the occasionally streamlining NW and S. The redactorial trend of NW and S leads them to addition (in differing degrees again, NW less, S more) and occasionally to excision also. On the other hand the interpolating tendency of NE which is traditional-minded is mixed with a conservative trend. Owing to this conservative and therefore more trustworthy character of the NE recension as a whole, it deserves at least the initial benefit of the doubt whether or not an extra-passage backed by it could have existed in the Archetype. We should be able to advance adequate reasons which could have impelled the silent manuscripts to excise it. We have done that and we have been obliged to regard some of the passages which we have examined and dealt with, as genuine, i.e. as belonging to the Archetype, because we can discover plausible



grounds for excision on the part of the Extremes, NW and S. There is no hard and fast rule operating in this procedure; every case is to be judged on its own individual merit. In pursuance of our pledge we have, we believe, shown in Part II both points 2 and 3 to be true in the Mahābhārata textual tradition.

(4) The vindication of the foregoing points (2 and 3) necessitates a thoroughgoing and painstaking psychological fathoming of the redactor-authors' motivations behind the manuscripts. This constitutes a very important aspect of our study. The manuscripts are not to be taken as fixed and rigid paper-quantities, but rather as living and dynamic psychological products of a redactorial-rational agency. So the science of Mahābhārata Text-Criticism does not become a perfunctory pick-and-choose game. The testimony of the manuscripts cannot be taken at its face value. Through a psychological treatment the individual manuscripts begin to disclose their mentalities behind their redactorial behaviour consisting in addition, substitution, elimination, transposition. It is due to the cumulative evidence derived from the similar way the same manuscripts behave in the case of similar passages in the same context, that the different cases become only expressions of an identical redactorial I.Q.

It is largely this vital psychological factor that has led us at times to the upholding of the NE alone even against the double testimony of NW and S, and consequently to a reversal of some of Sukthankar's careful text-critical decisions. The fact is that mere material documentary evidence can at times lead astray, and adherence to a pre-established combination of manuscript testimony is therefore full of danger. The paucity of extrinsic support does not straightaway allow a text-critic to discard a particular passage without due circumspection, which might eventually lead him to place it on the Archetype. Hence the need for a visualization of the psychological 'rationale' which can ensure a more correct text-critical reconstruction of the Archetype-text, and without the employment of which Text-Criticism may remain inadequate.

We do not, however, intend to disparage in the slightest degree, Dr. Sukthankar's masterly work or general approach. By no means he lacked proper psychological flair or a correct text-critical attitude in principle. In the actual application of the principles, however, we come to differ from him in certain cases of extra-passages, because we have had the facility of specially and more intensively concentrating on them. Dr. Sukthankar, despite his clear-sighted awareness of the nature of the Mahābhārata transmission tradition (as manifested in his statements implying that the athetized extra



passages were not necessarily spurious but were open to further text-critical scrutiny) could not in the very nature of things attach the fullest possible weightage to this psychological aspect owing to the sheer immensity and difficulty of his task. He was willynilly, constrained to impose limitations upon himself and could not afford to grapple with certain peculiarly stubborn text-critical problems. And so after the setting up and a consistent application of the generally valid Mahābhārata text-critical canons, he left his Critical Edition for a further deeper text-critical study on the basis of a selection of specific problems. Nevertheless, as a pioneer of the science of Mahābhārata Text-Criticism, his function was to establish a robust tradition by defining and substantiating a code of well-formulated principles after a thorough grasp of the difficult Mahābhārata transmission tradition; and he has fulfilled this task to the fullest. He has outstandingly succeeded in blazing the trail of scholarly Epic Text-Criticism in India. To pay tribute to that great master in this field is our privilege, and we would like our results to be considered as an humble homage to him, since it is only by his efforts that we are put in a position to take a step forward. This extension of Dr. Sukthankar's work may involve an amount of improvement in the reconstruction of the archetypal original. Yet, as he himself felt, his edition of the Epic was not *the* ideal reproduction of the Mahābhārata Archetype. The gap between Dr. Sukthankar's Critical Edition and the actual Archetype can be possibly narrowed by the supplementary and reinforced principles we seek to introduce. His work can be furthered and completed by means of a more detailed and careful study of the very manuscriptal data furnished and utilised by him. We are sure, Dr. Sukthankar would have been the first to welcome it with good grace and with his love of truth, thinking only of the gain accruing to his '*magnum opus*', and the resultant progress in the Mahābhārata text-critical study. The achievement of a definitive text-critical edition of the Mahābhārata in continuation and consummation of Dr. Sukthankar's great work should be our aspiration. The present study hopes to make a modest, though positive, contribution in that direction. More and more of such concentrated studies could be independently undertaken which would lead to a further precision of the Critical Text and continually closer to the original state of the Great Epic.



## Adhyāya 18, 7cd

- (6) tataḥ putrasahasraṃ tu kadrūr jihmaṃ cikīrṣatī  
 ājñāpayāmāsa tadā vālā bhūtvāñjanaprabhāḥ  
 (7) āviśadhavaṃ hayaṃ kṣipraṃ dāsī na syām ahaṃ yathā  
 S = tad vākyaṃ nānvapadyanta tām śasāpa bhujāṅgamān  
 N = nānvapadyanta ye vākyaṃ tām śasāpa bhujāṅgamān  
 (8) sarpasatre vartamāne pāvako vaḥ pradhakṣyati  
 janamejayasya rājarṣeḥ pāṇdaveyasya dhīmataḥ.

## Adhyāya 18, 285\*

śāpam enaṃ tu śuśrāva svayam eva pitāmahaḥ	
atikrūrāṃ samuddiṣṭaṃ kadrvā daivād atīva hi	9
sārdhaṃ devagaṇaiḥ sarvair vācaṃ tām anvamodata	
bahutvaṃ prekṣya sarpāṇāṃ prajānāṃ hitakāmyayā	10
tigmavīryaviṣā hy ete dandaśūkā mahābālāḥ	11ab
teṣāṃ tikṣṇaviṣatvād (d)hi prajānāṃ ca hitāya vai	11cd
yuktaṃ mātṛā kṛtaṃ teṣāṃ parapīḍopasarpiṇāṃ	285*,1
anyeṣāṃ api sattvānāṃ nityaṃ doṣaparās tu ye	285*,2
teṣāṃ prānāntiko daṇḍo daivena vinipātyate	295*,3
evaṃ saṃbhāṣya devas tu pūjya kadrūṃ ca tām tadā	285*,4
āhūya kāśyapaṃ deva idaṃ vacanam abravīt	285*,5
yad ete dandaśūkaś ca sarpā jātās tvayānagha*	285*,6
viṣosbaṇā mahābhogā mātṛā śaptāḥ parantapa	285*,7
tatra manyus tvayā tāta na kartavyaḥ kathamcana	285*,8
drṣṭaṃ purātanaṃ hy etad yajñe sarpavināśanam	285*,9
ity uktvā sṛṣṭikṛt devas taṃ prasādya prajāpatim	285*,10
prādāt viṣahaṇīm vidyāṃ kāśyapāya mahātmane	11ef

## Appendix 1.13

nāgās ca saṃvidam kṛtvā kartavyam iti tad vacaḥ	L.1
niḥsnehā vai dāhen mātā asaṃprāptamanorathā	L.2
prasannā mokṣayed asmāṃs tasmāc chāpāc ca bhāminī	L.3
kṛṣṇaṃ pucchaṃ kariṣyāmas turagasya na saṃśayaḥ	L.4
tathā hi gatvā te tasya pucche vālā iva sthitāḥ	L.5
etasmīn antare te tu sapatnyau paṇite tadā	L.6

## Appendix 1.12

tatas te tau paṇitaṃ kṛtvā bhagīnyau dvijasattama	
jagmatuḥ paramaprīte param pāraṃ mahodadheḥ	1
kadrūś ca vinatā caiva dākṣāyaṇyau viḥāyasā	
ālokayantyāv akṣobhyaṃ samudraṃ nidhiṃ ambhasām	2
vāyunātīva mahatā kṣobhyamāṇaṃ mahāsvanaṃ	
timīṃgilasamākīrṇaṃ makarair āvṛtaṃ tathā	3

285\*—K<sub>0.3.4</sub>V<sub>1</sub> (marg.) Da<sub>1</sub> Dn D<sub>1</sub> (omits line 7), 2.5.6 (omits line 10) insert after 11cd: D<sub>3</sub> (omits line 10), 4.7 (omits lines 1, 2, 10), after 11ab.

\* (or better, sarpā jātās' ca te' nagha)



<i>saṃyutaṃ bahusāhasraiḥ sattvaiḥ nānāvidhair api</i>	
<i>ghorair ghoram anādhṛṣyaṃ gambhīram atibhāiravam</i>	4
<i>ākaraṃ sarvaratnānām ālayaṃ varuṇasya ca</i>	
<i>nāgānām ālayaṃ cāpi suramyaṃ saritām patim</i>	5
<i>pātālaivalanāvāsam asurāṇāṃ tathālayam</i>	
<i>bhayaṇikārāṇāṃ sattvānāṃ payaso nidhim avyayam</i>	6
<i>śubhaṃ divyam amartyānām amṛtasyākaraṃ param</i>	
<i>aprameyam acintyaṃ ca supuṇyajālasammitam</i>	7
<i>mahānadībhir bahvībhis tatra tatra sahasraśaḥ</i>	
<i>āpūryamāṇam atyartham nṛtyantam iva cormibhiḥ</i>	8

App. 1.13.—K (except K<sub>1</sub>) V<sub>1</sub> (marg.) Da D<sub>5-7</sub> G<sub>1,2,4,5</sub> insert after 'sūta uvāca' (resp. its v.l.) of 1.20.1: Dn D<sub>1-4</sub>, after 'sautir uvāca' of App. 1.12.

App. 1. 12.—After adhy. 19, N<sub>1,2</sub> (both omit lines 1-6) V<sub>1</sub>BD (which all transpose 1.19.17) insert.

### Adhyāya 19 and App. 1.12

Cross references (such as 1c, 2a etc.) point to the parallel texts when not exactly opposite.

#### Adhyāya 19

- (1) *tato raṇanyām vyuṣṭāyām*  
*prabhāte udite ravāu*  
*kadrūś ca vinatā caiva*  
(2a)  
*bhaginyau te tapodhana*  
(1ab)
- (2) *amarṣite susaṃrabdhe*  
(1c)  
*dāsye kṛtapāṇe tadā* (1a)  
*jagmatuḥ turagaṃ dṛṣ-*  
*ṭum*  
*uccaiḥśravasam antikāt*
- (3) *daḍṛśāte tadā tatra*  
*saṃudraṃ nidhim aṃ-*  
*bhasām* (2d)  
*timīṅgilajhaśākīrṇam*  
*makarair āvṛtaṃ tathā*
- (4) *sattvaiś ca bahusāhasraiḥ*  
*nāgānām ālagaṃ ramyaṃ*  
*ugrair nityam anādhṛ-*  
*ṣyaṃ*  
*kūrmagrahasamākulam*
- (5) *ākaraṃ sarvaratnānām*  
*ālayaṃ varuṇasya ca*  
*nāgānām ālayaṃ ramyaṃ*  
*uttamaṃ saritām patim*

#### Appendix 1.12

- (1) *tatas te paṇitaṃ kṛtvā*  
(2b)  
*bhaginyau dvijasattama*  
(1d)  
*jagmatuḥ paramaprīte*  
(2a)  
*param pāram maho-*  
*dadheḥ* (vs. 2cd)
- (2) *kadrūś ca vinatā caiva*  
(1c)  
*dākṣāyaṇyau viḥāyasā*  
*ālokayantyāv akṣobhyam*  
(3a 9b)  
*saṃudraṃ nidhim aṃbha-*  
*sām* (3b)
- (3) *vāyunātīva mahatā* (9a)  
*kṣobhyamāṇam mahāsva-*  
*nam* (8b, 9b, 11d)  
*timīṅgilasamākīrṇam*  
*makarair āvṛtaṃ tathā*
- (4) *saṃyutaṃ bahusāhasraiḥ*  
*sattvair nānāvidhair api*  
*ghorair ghoram anādhṛ-*  
*ṣyaṃ* (8a)  
*gambhīram atibhaira-*  
*vam* (8bc)
- (5) *ākaraṃ sarvaratnānām*  
*ālayaṃ varuṇasya ca*  
*nāgānām ālayaṃ cāpi*  
*suramyaṃ saritām patim*



- (6) pātālaivalanāvāsam  
asurāṇām ca bandhanam  
bhayaṅkaram ca sattvā-  
nām  
payasāṃ nidhiṃ arṇavam
- (7) śubham divyam amartyā-  
nām  
amṛtasyākaram param  
aprameyam acintyaṃ ca  
supuṇyajalam adbhutam
- (8) ghoram jalacarārāva-  
raudram bhairavaniḥsva-  
nam (3b, 4d)  
gaṃbhīrāvartakalīlam  
(4c)  
sarvabhūtabhayaṅkaram
- (9) velādolānilacalam (3a)  
kṣobhodvegasaṃutthi-  
tam (3b)  
vīcīhastaiḥ pracalitair  
(vs. 8d)  
nṛtyantam iva sarvaśaḥ  
(8d)
- (10) candravṛddhikṣayaśāḍ  
udvṛttormidurāsadam  
pāñcajanyaśya jananam  
ratnākaram anuttamam
- (11) gāṃ vindatā bhagavatā  
govindenāmitaujaśā  
varāharūpinā cāntar  
vikṣobhitajalāvilam (3b)
- (12) brahmaṛṣiṇā ca tapatā  
varṣāṇām śatam atriṇā  
anāsāditagādham ca  
pātālatalam avyayam  
(6d)
- (13) adhyātmayoganidram ca  
padmanābhasya sevataḥ  
yugādīkāśayanaṃ  
viṣṇor amitatejasaḥ
- (14) vaḍavāmukhadīptāgnes  
toyahavyapradam śubham  
agādhapāram vistīrṇam  
aprameyaṃ sarīṭpatim  
(5d)
- (15) mahānadībhīr bahvībhīr  
spardhayeva sahasraśaḥ  
abhisāryamānam anīśam  
dadṛśāte mahārṇavam
- (16) gaṃbhīram timimakaro-  
grasaṃkulam tam (3cd)
- (6) pātālaivalanāvāsam  
asurāṇām tathālayam  
bhayaṅkarāṇām sattvā-  
nām  
payaso nidhim avyayam  
(12d)
- (7) śubham divyam amartyā-  
nām  
amṛtasyākaram param  
aprameyam acintyaṃ ca  
supuṇyajalasaṃmitam
- (8) mahānadībhīr bahvībhīr  
tatra tatra sahasraśaḥ  
āpūryamānam atyartham  
nṛtyantam iva cormībhīr  
(9cd)



*garjantaṃ jalacarārāva-  
raudranādaiḥ* (19, 8a)  
*vistīrṇaṃ daḍṛśatur aṃ-  
baraprakāśam*

(19. 14c, 3a, 15d)

*te' gādhaṃ nidhīm urum  
aṃbhasām anantam*

(19. 14c, 3b; 12, 2d)

(17)\* *ity evaṃ jhaṣamakaror-  
miṣaṃkulam tam*

(19, 3cd; 12, 8d)

*gaṃbhīraṃ vikasitam aṃ-  
baraprakāśam* (12, 4c)

*pātālajvalanaśikhāvidīpi-  
taṃ tam(?)* (6a)

*paśyantyau drutam abhi-  
petatus tadānīm* (2c)

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\* It is attached to 12, 1.8, by all the attesting manuscripts.



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## ABBREVIATIONS

ABORI	Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.
IA	Indian Antiquary.
IC	Indian Culture.
IHQ	Indian Historical Quarterly.
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society.
JBTRAS	Journal of the Bombay Branch of Royal Asiatic Society.
JBORS	Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society.
JOI	Journal of the Oriental Institute.
JRAS	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.
VQ	Vishvabharati Quarterly.

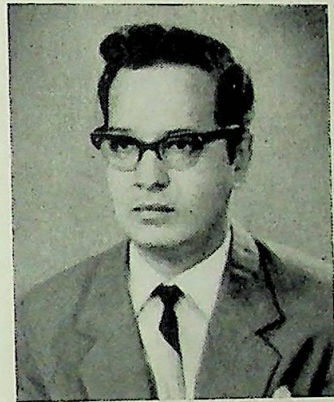












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